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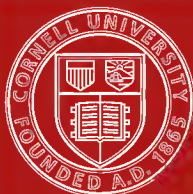
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SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD.

PART I.

By PRESIDENT G. W. NORTHRUP, D.D., LL.D.

LOUISVILLE, KY.:
BAPTIST BOOK CONCERN.
1894.

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PREFACE.

When the articles of Dr. Watts appeared in the *Western Recorder*, reviewing the articles of Dr. Northrup in the *Standard*, there was a wide call for their publication in permanent form. Hence it was decided to issue a volume containing these articles. Application was made to the *Standard* to join in the publication that both sides might appear. It was understood that this was declined, and the articles of Dr. Watts, with the first reply of Dr. Northrup, were then put in type and an edition printed. It developed, however, that there was no objection to publishing Dr. Northrup's articles in connection with those of Dr. Watts, but only that the *Standard* did not desire to join in bringing out the volume. Dr. Northrup's articles were then printed, marked Part I. It was fair that he should close the discussion which he had opened, and therefore he wrote an elaborate reply to Dr. Watts, which appears as Part III.

When the edition of Dr. Watts' articles was printed, it was not known that anything else would be in the volume, and so thick paper was used. It was therefore necessary to use like

paper in printing the other parts, that the book might be uniform throughout. This makes the volume larger than otherwise it would be, but it is all the stronger and better. This also explains why the book is divided into the three parts, and why there has been delay in its issue. But the result is to give the reader both sides of the controversy between acknowledged masters upon a subject of the greatest interest and importance,—a result well worth all it has cost.

T. T. EATON.

LOUISVILLE, KY.

December 5, 1893.

SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD,

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD IN PREDESTINATION.

AS HELD BY MANY REPRESENTATIVE CALVINISTIC THEOLOGIAN^s.

PART I.

Among those conceptions of the divine sovereignty which have prevailed more or less widely we notice the following:

1. The sovereignty of God is His right to govern the universe according to the decisions of His arbitrary will. Creatures have no claims in equity upon God, and He is under no obligation to them, except such as He has freely assumed by promise or in some other way. "His absolute dominion regards not any qualities or conditions of its objects, but He can in virtue thereof inflict the highest torments upon the innocent and exempt from punishment the most guilty.

2. Another representation is that God by virtue of His absolute sovereignty decrees and

effects everything which comes to pass, that His will is the sole efficient cause in the universe, as well in the realm of mind as in that of matter, working irresistibly to will and to do both in the evil and the good. Emmons—"It is as consistent with the moral rectitude of the Deity to produce sinful as holy exercises in the minds of men. He puts forth a positive influence to make moral agents act, in every instance of their conduct, as He pleases."

3. By the sovereignty of God is sometimes meant simply His independence and supremacy—the truth that by nothing outside of Himself is He limited in His authority and sway over His creatures.

4. The term is often used to denote the fact that the reasons of God's acts are unrevealed. Wardlaw—"All that I mean by the sovereignty of God is that He does not see fit to reveal the reasons of His acts." Cunningham—"The Arminians virtually deny the sovereignty of God by undertaking and proposing to assign the reasons of all His dealings with men."

5. A very common statement is that the sovereignty of God is "His absolute right to govern and dispose of all His creatures simply according to His own good pleasure," or according to His absolute perfection.

OTHER CONCEPTIONS OF GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY.

Setting aside the first two of the above views as not worthy of consideration, we remark that in neither of the others do we find clearly indicated the element characteristic of the doctrine of God's sovereignty as accepted by many representative Calvinists. All theologians will admit that God is supreme and independent, that He often acts from reasons which are unrevealed, and that His will is always exercised in harmony with His nature. There is, however, a radical difference of view as to the true nature of God's absolute perfection,—some divines predicating of Him, as an essential excellency, a principle of action which others affirm to be not only no excellency at all, but inconsistent with any worthy view of His character. The idea of the divine sovereignty to which we refer may be indicated in the following way: There is in God, if we may so speak, a twofold principle of action, by virtue of which some of His acts are morally necessary, while others are optional. In requiring perfect obedience of all moral agents, in exercising complacency towards the holy, in punishing the incorrigible according to their wickedness—in these and similar ways God acts, not according to his discretion, but under the behest of His absolute holiness or righteousness. But in pur-

posing to create the universe, to permit the fall of some of the angels and of Adam, in deciding to whom of the human race to extend, and from whom to withhold, renewing grace—in these and like matters God acts as a sovereign, being absolutely free to will or not will, and to will the precise opposite of that which He does will. In exercising the prerogative of sovereignty His acts are optional, while in meeting the demands of holiness or righteousness His acts are necessary in the sense that no other course is morally possible.

Shedd—"Sovereignty denotes optional power; that is, the power to act or not in a given instance. A sovereign that has no alternative is none at all. God is a sovereign and the highest of all. He may create a universe or not as He pleases. Were He obliged or compelled to create He would not be sovereign in creating. He may arrange and order His universe as He pleases. If He were confined to but one order He would not be sovereign in His providence. In His election of a sinner to salvation, God as supreme, independent, and sovereign, acts with entire liberty of decision, and not as shut up to one course."

Hill, *Lectures in Divinity*, (page 562)—"It must be admitted upon the Calvinistic system that God might have prevented this deviation and this suffering; that as no dire necessity re-

strains the Almighty from communicating any measure of grace to any of his creatures, the unmerited favor which was shown to some might have been shown to others also; and therefore, that all the variety of transgression, and the consequent misery of his creatures, may be traced back to the unequal distribution of that grace which he was not bound to impart to any, but which, although He might have imparted it to all, He chose to give only to some."

Edwards, (IV. 548)—1. "God can, without prejudice to the glory of any of His attributes, bestow salvation on any of the children of men, except on those who have committed the sin against the Holy Ghost"—an exception which He made in the exercise of His sovereign discretion. 2. "He may refuse salvation to any sinner whatsoever without prejudice to the honor of any of His attributes."

WHAT SUCH CONCEPTIONS INVOLVE.

But it is needless to multiply quotations from representative Calvinistic writers, expressing or implying the same idea of the divine sovereignty. Edwards is one of the most penetrating, logical, and luminous thinkers in the history of the church, and in the sermon referred to he sets forth in a full and powerful way the doctrine of God's sovereignty as a prerogative in

the exercise of which He is entirely free, as we have said, to will the precise opposite of that which He does will in the case of any individual. He remarks that, "If it would in itself be prejudicial to any of his attributes to bestow or refuse salvation, then God would not in that matter act as absolutely sovereign; it would then cease to be a merely arbitrary thing, or a matter of absolute liberty." An act of sovereignty is, then, "a merely arbitrary thing," "a matter of absolute liberty," the exact opposite of which is equally in His power, and would involve no prejudice to the honor of any of His attributes. According to this representation God does not and cannot act as a sovereign except in cases in which two or more courses of action are morally possible, or consistent with His perfections. If, then, there are several courses of action which are optional with God, they must be equally excellent, equally worthy of Himself. For to suppose that He does or can adopt a less in preference to a more wise and glorious mode of procedure, would impugn His absolute perfection. We must, then, regard the following propositions as true:

1. God decreed to elect a part of mankind and to reprobate the rest, and remains God, infinitely blessed and glorious.
2. Had He reversed these decrees as regards

the individuals included in them, electing those whom He reprobated, and reprobating those whom He elected, He would have remained God, infinitely blessed and glorious.

3. Had He decreed to include in either of these purposes any number of individuals less than the whole human race, He would have remained God, infinitely blessed and glorious.

4. Had He decreed the damnation of all, He would have remained God, infinitely blessed and glorious.

5. Had He decreed the salvation of all, He would have remained God, infinitely blessed and glorious.

WHAT THEY REQUIRE US TO ACCEPT.

Let us consider, now, what view of the character of God these propositions require us to accept. Having made an atonement sufficient for the whole world, God is now able, acting in complete harmony with His infinite perfections, to bestow salvation on all mankind,—those only excepted who have committed the unpardonable sin,—which exception He was entirely free not to make; and yet, notwithstanding the amplitude of the provisions of grace, He can refuse salvation to a part or all of mankind, acting in a manner equally honorable and glorious. The Scriptures teach that He will bring “a great multitude

which no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues" to the summit of finite honor and blessedness, fitted and destined to be forever with Jesus Christ, the witnesses of His exaltation and the sharers of His glory. We would inquire, now, if it would be speaking of God "the thing that is right," to say that it was optional with Him—morally possible for Him—a procedure that would have involved no violence to any principle of His nature—to have decreed to make an atonement in Jesus Christ, and yet, to consign to a state of everlasting sin and misery this great multitude, in whose regeneration, sanctification, and glorification, every divine perfection is displayed in the most impressive and glorious manner? The Scriptures also teach that a part—apparently a large part—of our race, "shall go away into everlasting punishment," every one of whom is certain to commit more acts of sin and to endure more suffering than have been committed and endured by all beings in the universe since "the angels that sinned were cast down to hell." Again, we would inquire if we are bound to believe that it was optional with God—morally possible for Him—a procedure which would have involved no violence to any principle of His nature—to have decreed the everlasting holiness and felicity of this multitude, in which case every one of them

would perform more holy acts, and enjoy more happiness, than have been performed and enjoyed in the universe since the first rational spirits cried one to another, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!"

These questions, we are told, are to be answered in the affirmative. If God had decreed to consign to the inconceivable horrors of hell all those "whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life," and if He had decreed to bring to the ineffable glories of heaven those to whom Christ will say: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels," He would have acted, it is affirmed, in a manner equally wise and worthy of himself as the creator and governor of the universe. But do the Scriptures warrant us in ascribing to God a prerogative in the exercise of which He is free—morally, absolutely free—to act in the way here indicated,—to ordain to dishonor and wrath any part of our race, when able to bring all to a state of eternal blessedness, acting in harmony with every principle of His nature? Is it credible that God, who so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son to the shame and agony of the cross in order to accomplish its redemption, would or could consign to eternal death any whom He could ordain to eternal life, without departing one iota from

the most wise and perfect method of moral government? In our judgment to suppose that He has done, or could have done this would contradict our necessary idea of his absolute perfection. And if God decreed the damnation of a part of our race, every one of whom He could have decreed to save, without prejudice to the glory of any of His attributes—His power, or wisdom, or independence, or immutability, or truth, or holiness, or justice, or righteousness, or benevolence, or mercy, or patience—we challenge any man to suggest a reason for His action which would not involve, logically, the denial of His benevolence. Observe that the question here presented is not the one with which the Calvinistic system is supposed to be burdened and which necessarily baffles our intelligence, why of two individuals between whom there is *no* difference as regards the reasons of His action God elects one and passes by the other; *but why He reprobates any*, seeing that He is free and able in every legitimate sense of these terms—metaphysically and morally free and able, on the ground of the atonement, to bring to the perfection and glory of the heavenly world the whole human race—leaving none of them “to dwell with the devouring fire,” none “to be cast into hell, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth,” none to call in vain to the mountains

and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb." If of the five propositions stated above, the last were true, the salvation of all men would be, in our judgment, as certain as the existence of God; but the acceptance of all of them as true—which the theory under consideration requires—necessarily implies that all of them are false; that is, that God is not infinitely blessed and glorious in perfection, but is wholly destitute of benevolence, and consequently of every moral excellence—having only the metaphysical properties of self-existence, independence, intelligence, and almighty will.

REASONS EXAMINED.

Let us examine some of the reasons which are urged in vindication of the benevolence of God in decreeing the damnation of a part of mankind though entirely free to decree the salvation of all.

1. It is urged that God has an absolute right to exercise justice in dealing with mankind involved in sin and guilt. But the mere right to exercise justice would not render its actual exercise consistent with benevolence if it were optional with Him, if He were entirely free, to exercise His mercy in the case of every human

being—as free to bring all as a part of our race to the awards of the heavenly world.

2. It is held that divine justice would be more clearly and impressively illustrated by the everlasting punishment of a part of mankind than it could be in case all were to be saved. But this supposition contradicts the theory which affirms that the honor of no one of the divine attributes would be diminished or prejudiced by the decree of universal salvation, but that all of them would be as gloriously manifested in the salvation of all men, as they would be in the salvation of a part and the destruction of a part.

The atonement is an infinitely glorious illustration of the justice of God; it is as the apostle declares (Rom. iii. 25, 26), a perfect theodicy, clearing the character of God in relation to the moral scandal which our world presents, and so satisfying His righteous indignation against mankind that He can “Himself be just and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus.” And who can doubt that if God can glorify Himself equally in the manifestation of wrath and of mercy in dealing with men, He will, in every instance, manifest His mercy, for the exercise of mercy is, while the exercise of wrath is not, congenial to His nature. “As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked.” It is of course true, that if men go on in sin and die

impenitent justice must demand that they be punished according to their guilt; but this fact has no bearing on the question before us, for the theory declares that there was no demand of justice forbidding God to regenerate and pardon these same persons.

3. It is said that it is the will of God to manifest His sovereignty and that His sovereignty like His other attributes is manifested in the exercise of it (Edwards). But if God should pardon all men His acts would be as truly acts of sovereignty as they would be in case He should pardon a part and refuse to pardon the rest. Should it be urged, however, as it commonly is that divine sovereignty must be manifested both in the way of wrath and of mercy in order that its true nature may be most clearly and impressively revealed, we would inquire:

(1) If the reprobation of one individual, or at most a few hundred, representing classes ranging from the lowest to the highest in guilt, would not be sufficient to answer the end here suggested—the display of sovereignty in the way of wrath?

(2) If it were *necessary* for God in order to make the most perfect self-revelation, to exercise His sovereignty in consigning to hell such and so many of our race as are included in the purpose of reprobation, how could it have been

optional with Him to decree the salvation of any one of this number? Is it optional with God to reveal Himself otherwise than in the most perfect manner? And if it is optional with Him to do this, how far would He be free to go in making an imperfect self-revelation? to the extent that the revelation would have no excellency at all?

4. It is held by many that the reprobation of a part of mankind is not only consistent with, but required by, infinite benevolence. This is the view of those theologians who regard benevolence as the fundamental ethical perfection of God. According to this theory God is determined in all His dealings with angels and with mankind, by supreme regard for the greatest good of creation. He purposed to save every man whom He could save consistently with this end. Had He decided to save the whole world, or to save one man, more or less, than He will in fact save, He would have defeated the end of infinite benevolence, choosing an inferior instead of a superior good, which would be a denial of Himself. But it would be difficult to advance an idea more profoundly repugnant to our deepest moral convictions than to say that God decreed the everlasting sin and anguish of a large part, or even of one, of the human race, in order to secure to the rest a higher degree of felicity.

And yet many have so conceived and represented "Him whose nature and whose name is Love." A theologian of fame in the latter part of the eighteenth century (Toplady), could write: "The blessing of election, somewhat like the Sibylline books, rises in value, proportionately to the fewness of its objects." According to this notion, it would seem that to be embraced in the infinite and everlasting love of God, would be a blessing hardly worth having if all men were to share in it; and that, since the "great salvation" rises in value, "proportionately to the fewness of its objects," it would reach its maximum value, in case only one person should obtain the felicity and glory of the heavenly world. So holy men of old thought and wrote of God and "His unspeakable gift." But it is obvious that this theory, based on the idea of benevolence as fundamental in God, is utterly inconsistent with the ascription to Him of an optional power in dealing with men; for the law of benevolence, which is the rule of all His acts, determined the decrees of election and reprobation, as regards both the number and the particular individuals to be included in each.

5. It is conjectured and there may be some unrevealed and inconceivable principle in the nature of God in virtue of which He refuses to pardon a part of our race. But this unknown

principle, whatever it may be, since it leaves Him entirely free in relation to all men to exercise mercy in which He infinitely delights, cannot move Him to exercise wrath in which He solemnly declares that He has no pleasure.

FALLACIES IN THE REASONING.

All these attempts to reconcile the action of God, in dealing with those who perish, with His infinite benevolence are necessarily rendered futile by the irrational and unscriptural nature of the assumption which they are designed to justify—viz.: that God ordained to dishonor and wrath those whom He was absolutely free to ordain to eternal life—whom He could have purposed to renew and sanctify and glorify, acting in harmony with every principle of His being.

Dr. Shedd asks: "What *sovereignty* has God in the salvation of a sinner, if He has no alternative in regard to election, regeneration and pardon? if eternal justice requires that He elect, and forbids that He pass by? if eternal justice requires that He regenerate, and forbids that He leave in unregeneracy? if eternal justice requires that He pardon, and forbids that He refuse to pardon?" (Calvinism: Pure and Mixed, p. 75.)

We think Dr. Shedd in error in supposing that the rejection of the notion of divine sovereignty which he defends, compels, logically, the admission that *eternal justice* requires God to elect,

regenerate and pardon sinners. Suppose we substitute "infinite wisdom" for "eternal justice" in the above quotation, it will then read: "What *sovereignty* has God in the salvation of the sinner if infinite wisdom requires that He elect, and forbids that He pass by? if infinite wisdom requires that He regenerate, and forbids that He leave in unregeneracy? if infinite wisdom requires that He pardon, and forbids that He refuse to pardon?"

Is it reasonable and scriptural to believe that in deciding to adopt the existing plan of creation God was guided by His infinite wisdom, by His absolute perfection, so that this plan, embracing the universe in its whole extant and everlasting duration, including all His acts in relation to angelic intelligence, holy and apostate, and in relation to the human race in their unfallen state, and in their state of sin and guilt, and of gracious probation, is the most wise and perfect plan which the infinite mind of God could conceive? If this representation is reasonable and scriptural, then it is right to say, that the infinite wisdom, the absolute perfection of God, required Him to include in the purpose of election such and so many men as are actually included in it, and to include in the purpose of reprobation such and so many men as are actually included in it; that had He decreed to elect or

reprobate one more or less, or to reprobate one of those whom He elected, or to elect one of those whom He reprobated, He would have acted less wisely and less worthily of Himself, and, therefore, inconsistently with His infinite perfection.

If this position is correct, it was not optional with God, in the sense in which the term is commonly used, to elect all men, or to reprobate all men, or to elect those whom He reprobated, and to reprobate those whom He elected. The decisive question here is not, what claims, in equity man has upon God, or what are His rights in relation to them, but what is most congruous with God's essential being; what is His obligation to Himself, as the all-perfect creator and governor of the universe, to satisfy the promptings of His love, so far as He can do so, acting in harmony with all His other perfections. Love is an essential and infinitely glorious attribute of God, whose mighty impulses He will infallibly satisfy—must needs satisfy—unless restrained by some behest arising from His absolute holiness. When we consider how profoundly opposed sin is to the holy nature of God, the urgency of His entreaties and expostulations with sinners, crying out night and day, “O, do not that abominable thing which I hate”; the fierceness of His indignation against those who trample upon His

laws and defy His authority; His amazing self-sacrifice in Jesus Christ to render the exercise of mercy possible; the inconceivable dreadful doom of apostate angels and of the incorrigible of our race,—hell with its horrors of outer darkness, and of everlasting fear, and shame, and regret, and remorse, and despair,—we are constrained to reject the theory which finds the explanation of this awful reality in the notion of the divine sovereignty as a prerogative whose exercise is optional in the sense in which it is held by representative Calvinistic theologians, and to believe that nothing short of some absolute impossibility, metaphysical or moral, could have prevented God from decreeing the regeneration and pardon of all mankind, and their everlasting holiness and happiness.

STATEMENT OF THE DOCTRINE AS PREFERRED.

The sovereignty of God is His right and power to constitute and govern the universe according to his absolute ethical perfection; it implies supremacy, independence, and infinite moral excellency, but not optional power in the sense that He is entirely free to will the exact opposite of that which He does will. He exercised His sovereignty in adopting the plan of the existing universe because of its supreme excellency as including those methods of action most worthy

of Himself. It is an assumption for the support of which there is no evidence accessible to the human mind, that there were other plans precisely equal to the one adopted in point of perfection as expressive of the mind and heart of God; or that He has ever performed, or ever will or can perform an act, the opposite of which, viewed in all its relations and bearings, would be equally wise and excellent, equally befitting Himself as infinitely benevolent and absolutely holy.

God is a sovereign and the highest of all, not because he possesses a prerogative in the exercise of which He is free to choose any one of an infinity of systems of creation, whether equal or unequal, in point of excellence; but because He possesses the power and the right to govern and dispose of all His creatures according to the dictates of His infinite intelligence, making Himself His own highest law, and highest good, and highest end. We deny that the Bible justifies the ascription to God of a prerogative in virtue of which He was entirely free to ordain to eternal life those whom He will consign to the congenial companionship of the devil and his angels.

It is as self-evident as any truth in mathematics that a perfect human father, remaining such, could not but pursue a course which would win back to virtue and happiness his wayward son,

in case he knew infallibly that course to be consistent with the best interests of the universe and the highest glory of God. And it cannot be less certain that our heavenly Father, of whose love for His disobedient children the most perfect human love is but an infinitely inadequate illustration, will save every one whom it is optional with Him to save—every one whom He knows He can save consistently with the best interests of His universal kingdom, and without prejudice to the glory of any of His attributes.

This position does not contradict nor is it in any degree inconsistent with, the teaching of Scripture, that salvation is in every instance in which it is bestowed a matter of pure and unbounded grace,—the mighty constraint of divine love enhancing immeasurably the graciousness of its expression towards those who deserve nothing but the retribution of divine justice.

According to the teaching of the Scriptures there is in God a principle of absolute ethical limitation or self-restraint. He cannot deny Himself; He cannot lie; He cannot be tempted with evil; He cannot give His glory to another. It is because of this principle or quality of the nature of God which renders it impossible that He should do what is unbecoming or unworthy of Himself, that all agree in making affirmations like the

following: God cannot command essential wickedness, as malevolence, ingratitude, selfishness; He cannot make the wicked happy in their wickedness; He cannot punish wrong-doers more than they deserve; He cannot require of unfallen beings more than He qualifies them to perform, etc. This principle of morally necessary self-restraint is not a limitation in the proper sense of the term; it is not a fetter on the life of God, but is essential to the highest freedom; He would not be more, but infinitely less, perfect if He could deny Himself. The principle of God's self-limitation or self-restraint is not His love or His holiness, but His absolute ethical perfection of which holiness and love are the essence, and which is the rule and law of His will in all its acts in creation, providence, and redemption. We have here, not a mere hypothesis, nor an idea derived from theological speculation, but a clear truth of revelation, a principle of moral government, which the Scriptures ascribe to God and from which they declare He cannot depart. And it is on the ground of this fundamental truth of inspiration that we affirm our conviction that God will do the utmost that He can do to save every member of our race; the utmost that He can do having due regard to the universal and everlasting interests of His kingdom and the glory of His name; that

He will consign no man to hell whom He could bring to heaven and remain God; no man whom He could "present faultless before the presence of His glory," acting in accordance with the most perfect system of moral government, with the supreme law of His absolute ethical perfection.

The sovereignty of God is the immutable foundation of the stability and moral order of the universe, and of the security and felicity of all holy beings. "And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thundrings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth" (Rev. xix.6). The divine sovereignty should be the source of the greatest encouragement and hope as well as of fear to sinners; of hope in assuring them that God is seeking the salvation of all men with infinite wisdom and love; and of fear in teaching that there are limits beyond which God as all-perfect will not—cannot go—even to the putting forth of one act—to save men from going down to destruction.

"There is a line by us unseen,
That crosses every human path;
The hidden boundary between
God's patience and His wrath."

"Because I have called and ye refused; I have stretched out My hand, and no man re-

garded: but ye have set at naught all My counsel; and would none of My reproof: I also will laugh in the day of your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as a storm, and your calamity cometh on as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish come upon you. Then they shall call upon Me but I will not answer; they shall seek Me diligently, but they shall not find Me" (Prov. i. 24-28).

OBJECTION CONSIDERED.

But it may be objected to the view of the divine sovereignty here presented that we must ascribe to God entire freedom to purpose, or not to purpose, to provide salvation for our race, His decision in either case being absolutely right and perfect.

"In the case of man," says Dr. Candlish (Atonement, 182,183), "had there been no remedy provided, we must believe that the whole progeny of Adam, whom, in his probation, he represented, would still have been brought into being. They were not in existence when he, as their head and representative, was tried and fell. They must have come into existence in successive generations after him. Is it not then a fair and probable presumption that all would have been suffered one after another, each individual for himself, to show what was in them? None

would have been taken away in infancy. None would have passed from earth before opportunity had been given them to manifest, by their own wicked works, their practical acquiescence and complicity in the rebellion of their first father. Under such an arrangement the reality and universality of imputed guilt and transmitted taint of his original apostasy, would have been proven to be inevitable." But we would inquire what warrant there is in reason or revelation for the view here presented, and which rigid Calvinism necessarily implies, that it was morally possible for God to purpose to create our first parents, to permit the fall and the development of the successive generations of their posterity, and to make no provision for their salvation. The hypothesis is to our mind an impossible one, and the discussion of it as empty and vain as it would be to seek to determine what degree of swiftness would enable the greyhound to outrun his shadow. As we have said above, all that is known, all that there is any warrant for affirming, is that the plan of the universe which God adopted because most worthy of Himself, included, as eternal and essential elements, the creation of man, the permission or non-prevention of the fall, and redemption through Jesus Christ. That the plan would have been equally perfect, or that it would have

been worthy of comparison with the existing plan—the element of redemption being left out—is what no man knows or can know, and what therefore no man has a right to affirm.

This position does not imply that as regards the rights and claims of men God was under obligation to provide salvation, but only that the present plan, embracing the certainty of the fall and the purpose of redemption, is the most congruous with His nature, expressing most perfectly His infinite perfections. The confusion, common at this point, comes from conceiving the divine decrees as sustaining to each other relations of logical priority or posteriority. But the decrees, so called, are simply one decree, viz.: that one, indivisible, eternal act of will by which God determined to give reality to the existing plan of creation; one purpose involving an infinite number of executive acts in time and space, which *executive acts*, not *purposes*, stand to each other in both logical and chronological relations. Logically and chronologically the creation of Adam must precede his trial, and his trial must precede his fall, and his fall must precede his redemption as a fact. But the acts of God in this affair are a part of the infinity of executive acts by which He carries out His one, eternal purpose to so constitute and govern the universe that all things would take place pre-

cisely as they do take place. But to speak of the *decree* to create as prior, in the logical order, to the *decree* to permit the fall, and the *decree* to permit the fall, as prior to the *decree* to provide redemption, implies a total and confusing misconception.

NOT A SPECULATION.

If it is said that this is theological speculation, that all who essay the transcendental heights of this region are sure to be stricken with intellectual vertigo, etc., we reply by affirming that it is not a theological speculation that God is a Being of absolute perfection, that He cannot deny Himself, or that, since benevolence is an essential perfection of His nature, He will infallibly glorify it—must needs glorify it—in the salvation of mankind, so far as He can do so, without prejudice to any other principle of His being more fundamental than benevolence itself. We add in conclusion that though no man is required, or may presume to be able, “to justify the ways of God” in relation to our world, it may be proper for one to reject, and to attempt to justify himself in rejecting, some of the ways ascribed to God under the supposed exigencies of logic. Infinitely more reasonable would it be to deny the application to the mind

of God of the fundamental laws of logic—to hold that He can choose a part of the members of a class without “passing by” the rest, than to attribute to Him ways of action self-evidently inconsistent with His supreme ethical perfections.

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD IN PREDESTINATION.

AS HELD BY MANY REPRESENTATIVE CALVINISTIC THEOLOGIAN.

II.

In an article published in the *Standard* of January 14th we considered the widely prevalent idea of the sovereignty of God, as an optional power in virtue of which He is absolutely free to will the exact opposite of that which He does will in regard to the eternal destiny of every human being, and affirmed that it involved, logically, the denial of the divine benevolence. In this paper we propose to examine the view which teaches that there is *nothing* in the way of difference between men to which God has regard as among the grounds, or causes, or reasons, or conditions, of His action in deciding to whom to extend, and from whom to withhold, renewing and pardoning grace. This conception of divine sovereignty differs somewhat from the one previously considered, as will be apparent in the course of the discussion.

THE CONCEPTION AS DEFINED.

Westminster Confession, chapter III., 5:
“Those of mankind who are predestinated unto

life, God . . . hath chosen in Christ . . . without any foresight of faith, or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or *any other thing* in the creature, as conditions, or causes moving Him thereunto."

Cunningham, *The Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation*, 434: "The Calvinistic doctrine is, that, in making the selection of some men and in resolving to save them, God was not influenced by anything existing in them, or foreseen in them, by which they were distinguished from other men, or by any reason known to, or comprehensible by us, but only by His own good pleasure."

Hodge, *Outlines of Theology*, 206: "The decrees of God are sovereign in the sense that while they determine absolutely whatever occurs without God, their whole reason and motive is within the divine nature, and they are neither suggested by, nor conditioned upon, anything whatever without Him." The position which we shall attempt to establish in this discussion is that the theory that in forming the decrees of election and preterition (non-election, rejection) God acted irrespective of *any difference* between those appointed to these infinitely diverse destinies, necessarily implies *purely arbitrary and capricious action* in dealing with mankind.

That the decree of individual election necessarily involves the antithetic decree of individual rejection (non-election, preterition), is affirmed by the great body of representative Calvinists—Calvin, Turretin, Ridgley, Owen, Gill, Dick, Cunningham, Edwards, Hodge, Shedd, Patton. Two quotations will express the view of all. Dick, *Lectures on Theology*, 191: “Election and rejection are correlative terms, and men impose on themselves and imagine that they conceive what it is impossible for them to conceive, when they admit election and deny reprobation. When of several objects some are chosen, the rest are rejected. It is of no purpose to say that nothing has been done to them, but that they are left in the state in which they were found. In one sense this is true, and in another sense it is not true; because, as they might have been chosen, but were not, there has been an act of the mind refusing to choose them.”

Shedd, “Proposed Revision,” etc., 41,42: “Preterition is the contrary of election and one of two contraries implies the other. . . . No one should contend that there is an election of individuals but not a preterition. . . . It is impossible to think of individual election by itself, or to teach it alone by itself. To affirm in a creed the decree of individual election, and to deny that of preterition, is the height of absurdity.”

This position would seem to be an inexorable logical necessity, being demanded, as President Patton remarks, by the axiom that the whole is greater than its part.

THE QUESTION TO BE CONSIDERED.

That God loves all men in the sense of having a desire to save each and every one, is made certain by the plainest declarations of the Bible: John iii. 16: "God so loved *the world* that He gave His only begotten Son, that *whosoever* believeth on Him should not perish but have eternal life;" I. Tim. ii. 4: "God our Saviour *willeth* that *all* men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth;" II. Peter iii. 9: "The Lord is long-suffering to you-ward, *not wishing* that any should perish, but that *all* should come to repentance;" I. John ii. 2: "Jesus Christ is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but *also* for (the sins of) *the whole world*;" Rom. xi. 32: "For God hath shut up *all* unto disobedience, that He might have mercy upon *all*." Since Jesus Christ is "the image of the invisible God" (Col. i. 15), "the effulgence of His glory and the very image of His substance" (Heb. i. 3), since He and the Father are one in nature and spirit (John xiv. 9), we must regard His words recorded in Luke xiii. 34, xix. 41, 42 as a most tender and pathetic expression of di-

vine compassion towards those whose wickedness was rapidly rising to its culmination: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, *and ye would not.*" "And when He was come near, He beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace!"

In view of these and numerous other passages of similar import there can be no question that in the work of salvation God was moved wholly by causes lying in Himself—His spontaneous and infinite compassion for the souls of men. The question which we are to consider in this paper is, whether of two individuals between whom there is *no difference* as regards the total reasons of His action, God ordains one to eternal life, and decides "to pass by" the other.

It is of course admitted by the advocates of this theory that there are differences many and great between men in intellectual endowments, in learning, in adaptation to usefulness, in the boldness with which they defy the authority and trample upon the laws of God, in their attitude toward the appointed means of grace, etc. But these and all other differences are held to be of no account as regards the matter in hand,—

they furnish not only no “moving causes” but no “conditions” of those divine discriminations which decide the eternal destinies of the members of our race.

But if there is *no difference* between men which God takes into account in determining whom to elect and whom to reject or pass by; if men are, as regards the reasons, or conditions of His decisions so absolutely alike that *omniscience* can discern no difference between them, then to say that He *discriminates* between them in view of certain inscrutable reasons lying in His own nature, is to use words to which no possible meaning can be attached. According to this representation the purpose to save certain individuals and to “pass by” the rest, must be regarded as purely arbitrary—there being *no* motive for electing or rejecting one man *rather than* another.

[It will not remove or lessen this difficulty to say that there may be reasons in the universe apart from men in view of which the decrees of election and rejection are formed. Reasons, whether lying in the nature of God, or existing in the universe viewed apart from man, cannot render the choice between objects which are *identical* in His regard conceivable, much less rational and wise.] The only tenable position which can be taken is, that it was in the highest

degree worthy of God to propose to extend saving grace to some and to withhold it from others; but as regards the *particular individuals* to be embraced in these respective classes it was to Him a matter of absolute indifference;—a position which compels us to hold that His purposes would have been as wise and glorious if they had been reversed, as regards the individuals included in them;—those having been elected who were reprobated—Pharaoh, Ahab, Herod, Judas, etc., and those reprobated who were elected—Abraham, David, Paul, Augustine, Edwards, Judson, etc.

A good illustration and one sometimes used to set forth this method (?) of divine procedure is the following: A regiment becomes insubordinate and it is deemed best, for public reasons, that some of the men should be shot. But as there is no difference between the men why some should be chosen for punishment rather than others, is decided to select by lot and punish with death every tenth man. “The death of these particular men is for reasons, but the reasons are not in the men.” The application of the illustration is obvious. Men have rebelled against God and certain reasons, unrevealed and inscrutable, require that *some* should receive the punishment which *all* deserve. And so disregarding all differences between men,

viewing them as a mass of indistinguishable units, God decides the question of the particular men to be ordained to dishonor and wrath in a manner as arbitrary as that of casting lots for the decimation of a regiment! Is it credible that the infinitely wise God acts, in a matter of transcendent importance, in a manner in the slightest degree analogous to this clumsy, non-moral, or rather immoral human expedient? Granting, as we must grant, that there are the highest reasons why the infinitely wise and compassionate God purposed not to bestow eternal life upon a part of mankind; can we accept a theory which necessarily implies that He acted without reason in selecting rather than others the particular individuals to whom he refuses to grant the gracious help without which their everlasting sin and misery is not only certain, but inevitable?

THE DIFFICULTY TO BE MET.

It is essential that we see clearly just what the difficulty is which confronts us here.

1. It is not that God purposed to save a part of our race and to leave the rest to perish in their sins; "for in the case of criminals the pardon of some does not originate a claim, in justice, for pardon on the part of others."

2. It is not that the reasons of God's acts in

this affair are regarded as not only unrevealed, but of such a nature that they cannot be made known to us; "for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are His ways higher than our ways, and His thoughts higher than our thoughts."

3. It is not that in all His dealings with mankind God acts from reasons lying in Himself, for this would be true were He to regenerate those whom He leaves in unregeneracy and to leave in unregeneracy those whom He regenerates.

4. But the absolutely fatal objection is that the theory under discussion excludes every possible reason, *known, or unknown*, for discriminating between mankind—the elect and the non-elect being as regards the total reasons or conditions of His action as absolutely alike as are the points of space or the moments of duration,—a position which logically implies, as we have said, that though it was in the highest degree worthy of God to extend saving grace to some and to withhold it from others, the question of the particular individuals to be embraced in these respective purposes, must have been to Him a matter of entire indifference. And does not this compel us to believe that His decisions respecting the eternal life or the eternal death of the members of our race are as arbitrary as

they would be were He to determine *by lot* the destiny of every man?

Again, the universe, physical and moral, is one system—the unfolding of one eternal plan, embracing all things that have been, that are and that shall be, all parts of which stand to each other and to the whole in definite and fixed relations. Inductive science teaches that the physical creation is a system of necessarily-related and inter-dependent substances and forces, all ceaselessly acting and re-acting upon each other. The creation or the annihilation of a world or of an atom, would affect instantly and forever every world and every atom to the utmost bounds of the material system. The history of the human race is a development in which all individuals and all events sustain to each other necessary, natural, and organic relations. The history of our world—one person or one event being left out—would present a problem which no intelligence, finite, or infinite, could solve.

Now it is certain that men differ from each other in many respects, and if God does not take these differences into account in forming the decrees of election and preterition, they exist all the same, and necessarily become important factors in the world's history. If God had appointed some other man than Abraham to be the founder of the Jewish nation, or some other man

than Paul to be the apostle to the Gentiles, or some other man than Luther to inaugurate the Reformation, the course of events in the world would have differed beyond our power of conception from its actual course. Or if He had decreed to regenerate those whom he decreed to leave in unregeneracy, and to leave in unregeneracy those whom he decreed to regenerate, the history of our race would have been infinitely different from what it has been and will be.

But if there is no difference between men to which, as foreseen, God had respect in deciding whom to elect and whom to pass by, there can be no difference in His view, in point of excellency or perfection, between the diverse courses of events in the world's history as determined by these men, according as they are elected or rejected. If of two individuals, A and B, the election of A and the rejection of B would be necessary to the most perfect plan of the world's government, and the election of B and the rejection of A would be inconsistent with that plan, then it would not be optional with God to elect B and to reject A, for it cannot be optional with God to adopt any other than the most wise and perfect plan of the world's government. Hence, whatever decrees God might have formed, there could have been *no difference* in His view, in point of perfection, as expressions

of His manifold attributes, between the infinitely diverse results in history according to the infinitely diverse ways in which He was free to exercise His sovereignty in determining the destiny of the individuals of our race. But the human race is a part—perhaps the most important part—of God's universal empire; a part of that hierarchy of spiritual beings, rising rank above rank in power and dignity, the crowning glory of all His works. And as every individual must affect the world's history differently according as he is appointed to be a "vessel of mercy," or a "vessel of wrath," so every individual must make the whole universe infinitely different, in some respects, according as he is appointed to dwell with the devil and his angels, or to dwell forever with Jesus Christ. Hence, there must have been an infinite number of diverse plans of creation, precisely equal or identical in his esteem, as manifestations of his perfections.

1. The plan which He adopted, including the election of a certain number and the preterition of a certain number, was infinitely wise and perfect.

2. Had He adopted a plan which involved the reversal of these decrees as regards the individuals embraced in them—the election of those reprobated and the reprobation of those elected, it would have been infinitely wise and perfect.

3. Had He adopted any one of the infinity of possible plans which would have embraced the election of one or more of those reprobated and the reprobation of one or more of those elected, it would have been infinitely wise and perfect. And according to the idea of sovereignty considered in our former paper—

4. Had He adopted a plan which included the reprobation of all it would have been infinitely wise and perfect.

5. Had He adopted a plan which included the salvation of all it would have been infinitely wise and perfect.

All these supposable plans, infinite in number and diversity, were, it is affirmed, optional with God, and therefore, so exactly equivalent or identical in excellency as expressions of His essential glory, that omniscience itself could discern no difference between them. Hence, in adopting the present plan, in preference to all others He made a choice—or rather He performed an act—for which He could give no reason to His own mind, which is the very essence of arbitrariness—the action of will unregulated by intelligence.

It is worthy of notice in this discussion that Edwards, Chalmers, Turretin and many other Calvinists adopt the principle of “philosophical necessity” as of universal application, as the law

of the divine mind and of all finite intelligences. Every rational being must choose according to the last dictate of the understanding as to what is best or most desirable. The idea of an alternative choice in any case is declared to be absurd. Edwards, ii.146—"If God's will is steadily and surely determined in everything by supreme wisdom, then it is in everything necessarily determined to that which is most wise. It is no more to God's dishonor to be necessarily wise than to be necessarily holy. And if neither of them be to His dishonor, then it is not to His dishonor necessarily to act holily and wisely. And if it be not dishonorable to be necessarily holy and wise, in the highest possible degree, no more is it mean and dishonorable to act holily, and wisely in the highest possible degree; or, which is the same thing, to do that, in every case which above all other things, is wisest and best."

Edwards discusses at length the objection to his view, "that in many instances we must suppose there is absolutely no difference between various possible objects of choice which God has in view," and urges in reply, that "it is a thousand to one—yea, an infinite number to one—that there are no two things in the universe exactly alike." And yet the theory that the decrees of election and preterition were formed

irrespective of any difference between men self-evidently implies the existence in the mind of God of an infinite number of systems, precisely equal or identical in the only respect in which he can regard them as possible objects of choice; viz.: their excellency as manifestations of his essential perfections.

To conclude the discussion of this point; there is one, and in our judgment, but one supposable way by which the divine decisions in the matter of election and non-election can be vindicated against the charge of pure arbitrariness, viz.: *the acceptance of the position that there is some difference or differences between men to which God has respect, which are, if not "moving causes," yet "conditions," of His decisions.* As there are, in fact, differences among men, it is as certain that He takes these differences into account in determining the diverse destinies of men in the future world as that He does so in determining their diverse conditions and careers in this world.

IMPLIED SOLUTIONS.

Every theological system—Pelagian, Semi-Pelagian, Lutheran, Arminian, Calvinistic, moderate and strict, either explicitly assert, or take positions which involve, logically, the view that there is *something* in men which determines or conditions the action of God in choosing one man rather than another.

We will attempt in the briefest possible manner to justify this statement.

THE ARMINIANS.

1. Arminianism may be considered as representing all non-Calvinistic systems as regards the point under consideration. This theory is that the purpose of election is based, or conditioned, on foreseen repentance and faith, and perseverance in the same till death. The difference, then, between men to which God has respect in election is the radical difference between repentance and faith, impenitence and unbelief. But we believe that this representation is unscriptural, that renewal—passing from death to life—is not an act of will—the acceptance of Jesus Christ—but is the exclusive work of God, at the center of the soul, changing its moral bias, originating a holy disposition which abides as the foundation of all holy activity. When a man exercises repentance and faith he is already renewed—these acts are expressions of the new life.

Though man has a measure of freedom, “a remainder of liberty,” in the exercise of which his acts, under divine grace, may have a decisively favorable bearing upon his eternal destiny, it is not an ability by virtue of which he can will himself from darkness into light, from death

into life,—can create himself anew in Jesus Christ. He is not, of course, passive, listless, inert, but is active, often intensely so, before and at the time of renewal; but in the origination of the new life he has no agency. At times the Holy Spirit flashes the illuminating and burning rays of divine truth into the soul, dispelling its darkness, starting into intense action the dormant and deadly principles of sin, setting the conscience on fire, awakening regret, shame, fear, remorse, appealing to the higher and nobler aspirations which sin has not destroyed, and which point the soul to the height from which it has fallen; prompting to intense and persevering efforts, to arduous and agonizing struggles, to obtain eternal life. But these manifold activities are not the new life, they have no inherent power to produce spiritual renovation, they might continue forever with no other result than that of intensifying the soul's opposition to God. But in the midst of these varied activities of reason, conscience, sensibility and will,—beneath them all, below conscience itself, at the centre of the soul, there is a divine touch opening the blind eyes, emancipating the enslaved will, and calling into exercise faith, and love, and hope, and every other spiritual principle of our being. Thus repentance and faith are, in the logical order, subse-

quent to regeneration, which is the exclusive work of God, and which necessarily presupposes an eternal purpose of salvation.

SOME CALVINISTS.

2. The view somewhat prevalent among Calvinists that benevolence is the fundamental ethical perfection of God, necessarily implies that there are differences among men which determine God in the formation of his decrees; furnishing a reason or condition, one and the same, in the case of all the elect, to which He had respect in deciding to elect them rather than to pass them by; and a reason, one and the same, in the case of all those passed by, to which He had respect in deciding to leave them in sin rather than to save them. This reason or condition is the relation of every man to the end which is of paramount value in His esteem—the greatest good of creation. He purposed to deal with every man according to the immutable requirement of this supreme end; to elect such and so many as are necessary to secure the greatest aggregate good of the universe. Had He decided to save the whole world, or to save all, or even one of those whom He decided to refuse to save, He would have defeated the end of infinite benevolence, choosing an inferior in preference to a superior good, which would be a

denial of Himself. He decides to deliver men from sin, or to leave them in sin, according as these diverse destinies will enhance, in the highest degree, the happiness of the universe. This theory clearly implies, in the strong language once widely current in our country, as expressive of the teaching of one of its most logical and powerful advocates, "that we ought to be willing to be damned for the glory of God," in case our existence in misery forever were necessary to the greatest aggregate good of the rational creation.

As the perdition of a part of mankind *is* essential to this end, and as the divine plan, determined in all its parts by this end, may include any member of our race, it was urged that men ought to be willing and even to desire to be damned for the glory of God, or for the promotion of the end which has the first place in His regard and which is identical with His glory. Not a few Christians were driven to despair, in the first half of the present century, because of their failure to find satisfactory evidence of their regenerate state by the application of this cruel and absurd test. They found in themselves not only no willingness, but a most vehement unwillingness, to go to hell for the greatest good of the universe, or for any other reason. Is it not extraordinary that a theory should have ad-

vocates among Christian thinkers which finds the ultimate explanation of all the sin and misery in the universe in the divine purpose to advance a part of the moral creation to the summit of honor and blessedness? Is it not axiomatically certain that there is not a being in the universe confirmed in holiness who would not unhesitatingly choose to share with all mankind a degree of good however low, than to enjoy a degree of good however high, on condition of the everlasting sin and anguish of even one human being? And can it be otherwise than axiomatically certain that the infinitely holy and benevolent God could not purpose to consign one soul to the endless misery of hell merely in order to secure to the rest a higher measure of blessedness?

We reject, therefore, the idea which this theory presents as to the nature of the difference between men to which God has respect in determining the diverse conditions of men in the future world, viz.: the necessary relation of these states to the greatest good of creation.

MOST CALVINISTS.

3. But the great body of Calvinists hold that the final end of God in creation is not the greatest aggregate good of His creatures, but the perfect revelation of His attributes. This is

the glory of God, the excellency of His acts as determined by the law of His own absolute ethical perfection. Whether He calls into existence one or innumerable orders of moral beings; whether He permits the fall of none, or of a part, or of all these beings; whether He saves all the fallen, or none, or a part of them; whether He annihilates the incorrigible, or keeps them in existence forever; whenever, and however He acts, on earth, in heaven, or in hell, His final end is one and the same, to do what is most worthy of Himself as a Being of infinite excellency. Whatever He can do consistently with this supreme rule of action to promote the well-being of all personal agents it is infallibly certain that He will do, but He will not, because He *cannot*, put forth one act derogatory to Himself to save one order or all orders of personal agents from self-ruin.

Now the execution of His eternal decrees of election and reprobation is an essential part of God's perfect self-revelation. Is it credible that He is determined in all His acts by the purpose to make the most perfect self-revelation, and yet that in the matter of predestination He acts irrespective of all differences between men, differences, which are, in fact, great even in the case of any two individuals who are the most alike, and which must render the universe infinitely different

according as the one or the other is ordained unto life? It is said that "we cannot discover any general rule in God's dealings, unless it be this, that in election God seeks to illustrate the greatness and variety of His grace—the reasons lying, therefore, not in men, but in God." Would the fact that a physician were moved by reasons lying in himself—his benevolence or his desire to display his skill—prevent him from taking into account any differences between his patients as "conditions" of his diverse treatment? And if God in election seeks "to illustrate the greatness and variety of his grace," there must be *something* in the men chosen by virtue of which they are better fitted than those passed by, to the end in view. If their superior fitness for "illustrating the greatness and variety of his grace," is not the "moving cause," it certainly is the indispensable "condition" of His action in electing them. Of two men *equally* suited to be the means of "illustrating the greatness and variety of His grace" He could not, under the supposed rule of action, without pure arbitrariness, choose one and reject the other. And of two men *differing* in fitness in relation to the end in view, He could not, without contradicting the principle of action suggested, elect the one of inferior and reject the one of superior fitness. God acts from "reasons lying in Himself" in

dealing with the regenerate, but this does not prevent Him from taking into account the differences between them in His providential and gracious discipline. He acts from "reasons lying in Himself"—His holy displeasure against sin—in punishing the incorrigible, but this fact does not prevent Him from discriminating between them and rendering to every one according to his guilt. The differences between the regenerate and between the incorrigible, if not the immanent motives of His action, are yet among the reasons of His diverse treatment.

• PAUL'S TESTIMONY.

The Apostle Paul mentions one fact connected with himself as a reason why he was chosen, I. Tim. i. 15,16: "Faithful is the saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. Howbeit, for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me as chief might Jesus Christ show forth His long suffering for an example of those who should hereafter believe on Him to eternal life." In this passage Paul declares that the reason, or one of the reasons, why God chose him was that he was the chief of sinners. We have here a statement made by the apostle of a reason in himself, the greatness of his sins, which determined or conditioned the act of God

in his election. This declaration touching the point before us, giving a reason or one of the reasons why he was chosen, seems to us an explicit contradiction of the position that there is *nothing* in men which determines God's choice of one man rather than another; a position involved in the Augustino-Calvinistic theory that the decrees of God in predestination are, in the logical order, antecedent to and independent of all personal action as foreseen. Mozley, *Predestination*, 393—"Augustine and Calvin alike hold an eternal divine decree, which, antecedently to all action, separates one portion of mankind from another, and ordains one to everlasting life and the other to everlasting punishment. That is the fundamental statement of both; and it is evident that while this fundamental statement is the same there can be no substantial difference in the two doctrines. This statement is the sum and substance of the doctrine of predestination."

Paul's personal sins as foreseen could not, therefore, have been on this hypothesis, a reason, or condition of the bestowment of mercy upon him. God bestowed mercy upon Paul because He eternally purposed to do so, and the reason for the actual bestowment of saving grace must be the same as that which caused or determined the purpose to bestow it. And since the greatness of his sins was a cause,

or condition of God's act in renewing and pardoning him, the greatness of his sins *as foreseen* must have been among the considerations causing or determining God to bestow renewing and pardoning grace. But this is a demonstrable logical impossibility according to the theory we are examining, which teaches that the *foresight* of the personal action of men is, in the logical order, subsequent to and dependent upon the decrees of election and preterition. Hence, it is impossible, that Paul's sins *as foreseen* could have been a ground, or a condition, of God's decree to make him a vessel of mercy. But the apostle declares explicitly that the reason why God chose him was that he was so great a sinner.

There is another statement of Paul respecting himself equally irreconcilable with this theory: I. Tim. i. 13—"But I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief." In this passage the apostle clearly implies that if he had blasphemed Christ and persecuted his church, knowing the truth concerning Him, he would have excluded himself from the possibility of divine mercy. But the view before us teaches that God's decree to bestow mercy on Paul was formed in absolute independence of the *foresight* of his personal action; that during his whole career of wickedness he was acting under the

dealing of God with him as embraced in the purpose of election from the first moment of his ante-natal existence, and with sole regard to his legal and moral condition as unborn; that, consequently, the foresight of his personal sins, of whatever magnitude they might have been, could have had no influence in preventing the bestowment of mercy; that it was because he had already been made the recipient of mercy in God's purpose of election that he was kept from committing the sins which would have excluded him from the possibility of forgiveness. These declarations are not inconsistent with each other; they teach that while the greatness of the sinner's sin may be a reason for the bestowment of mercy, his sins may be of such a nature as to preclude the possibility of pardon.

It is reasonable to suppose that the greatness of their sins is among the reasons or conditions of God's purpose to extend saving grace to many in every age. But this cannot give the general rule of His action in the choice of men, for He saves those whose sins are of every degree of magnitude—the least as well as the greatest sinners.

The question, then, remains to be answered: Is there a difference between men in which we can discover a *general rule* in God's dealing with them in the matter of salvation; a difference not

in point of repentance, or faith, or merit, or of anything "which can be pleaded as a ground of acceptance with God;" still *something* to which God, dealing with men in a state of gracious probation, can wisely and properly have respect, in deciding to save one man rather than another?

We believe that no adequate rational or Scriptural evidence can be adduced in support of either of these propositions:

1. That the sovereignty of God is a prerogative in the exercise of which He is absolutely free to will the exact opposite of that which He does will in relation to the destiny of every human being.

2. That there is *no difference* between men to which God has respect as among the reasons or conditions of His choice of one man rather than another.

3. That the purpose to pass by—to withhold renewing grace, is, in the logical order, antecedent to and independent of *the actual foresight* of the personal action of those included in that purpose.

The first proposition involves, logically, the denial of the divine benevolence; both the first and second necessarily imply purely arbitrary and capricious action on the part of God in dealing with mankind; while the third requires us to

believe, according to the theory of strict Calvinism:

(1) That the perdition of a part of mankind—the non-elect—is not only certain, but *inevitable*, let them do what they can to obtain salvation, even in the way appointed in the gospel.

(2) That God has no compassion for this class, and is not dealing with them in good faith.

These propositions are no part of “the gospel of the grace of God,” no part of “the good news to *all* people” which Christ and His apostles preached, but metaphysical speculations by which Christian theology has been burdened to its serious injury.

In conclusion we are moved to ask if the words of Chalmers (Institutes of Theology II. 419) are as applicable to our day as they were to his own: “The middle age of science and civilization is now terminated, but Christianity also had its middle age, and this, perhaps, is not yet fully terminated. There is still a remainder of the old spell, even the spell of human authority, and by which a certain cramp or confinement has been laid on the genius of Christianity. We cannot doubt that the time of its complete emancipation is coming, when it shall break loose from the imprisonment in which it is held; but meanwhile there is, as it were, a stricture upon it not yet wholly removed, and in virtue of which the

largeness and liberality of heaven's own purposes have been made to descend in partial and scanty droppings through the strainers of an artificial theology, instead of falling, as they ought, in a universal shower upon the world." And are the cause of this "imprisonment" and the way of "emancipation" indicated in the following words of Dr. Bruce? Kingdom of God 127 (Italics our own)—"Has not Christendom been slow to learn the revelation of the Father? Have we not yet to learn it, by accepting the Jesus of the Gospels as an absolutely true and full manifestation of the divine being, and believing without reserve that He and God are in spirit one? *A thoroughly Christian idea of God is still a desideratum, and when the church has reached it, the kingdom of God shall have come in power.*"

Morgan Park, Ill.

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD IN PREDESTINATION.

AS HELD BY MANY REPRESENTATIVE CALVINISTIC THEOLOGIAN.

III.

It is our chief aim in this article to discuss the following question: Does the doctrine of God's Sovereignty in Predestination, as contained in the strict Calvinistic system, *necessarily* imply that the perdition of a part of mankind—the non-elect—is not only certain, but *inevitable*, let them do what they can to obtain salvation, even in the way appointed in the gospel?

THREE CALVINISTIC SYSTEMS.

There are three doctrinal systems known as Calvinistic which differ from each other chiefly as regards the order of the divine decrees.

1. According to one theory (supra-lapsarianism, hyper-Calvinism), the object of the decrees was man viewed, not as fallen, nor even as created, but simply as creatable—as a possible object of creation. God determined to glorify Himself in the manifestation of His perfections—especially His mercy and justice; and as a means

to this end He decreed to save some men and to damn others, regarded as possible beings; to create these possible beings, to ordain their fall, to provide a Saviour for the elect, and to consign the rest to hell. This scheme has been held by a small number of Calvinistic divines distinguished for learning and logical ability, *e. g.*, Beza, Calvin's successor at Geneva, Gomarus, the chief opponent of Arminius, Twisse, moderator of the Westminster Assembly. The Calvinistic theologians of the present day, while many of them admit that the scheme is the most logical of all, with few or no exceptions reject it, holding "that the case is too high and too vast for the *a priori* application and enforcement of the ordinary rules of human judgment."

2. The second theory—that of strict Calvinism—differs from the first in regarding man, viewed as created and fallen, as the object of the divine decrees (*infra-lapsarianism*).

STRICT CALVINISM AS DEFINED AND MAINTAINED.

3. The third theory is that of moderate Calvinism, of which there are two types, both of which differ from strict Calvinism chiefly in two points: (1) In affirming that the atonement is not limited, but universal in its design (which involves the question of the order of the de-

crees). (2) In claiming for man "natural ability" to comply with the conditions of salvation, though admitting his utter "moral inability" to do so. The chief point of difference between the two types of moderate Calvinism is, that the one affirms and the other denies that man is under condemnation antecedent to the age of moral responsibility.

By strict Calvinism we mean the system of doctrines contained in the early Reformed creeds—especially in the Westminster Standards; in such works as those of Turretin, Ridgeley, Cunningham, and of the American divines, Charles and Alexander Hodge, Shedd and Dabney.

I. That the question asked at the beginning of this article must be answered in the affirmative seems to us as demonstrably certain as the forty-seventh proposition of the First Book of Euclid, "that the square formed on the hypotenuse of a right-angled triangle is equal to the sum of the squares formed on the other two sides." The steps of this demonstration are the following:

1. In virtue of the natural or representative relation of Adam to his posterity, his fall was, in the divine judgment, really or virtually their fall.

2. Hence "God justly *imputes* Adam's apostasy

tizing act to them, treating them as legally responsible for Adam's sin, and obnoxious to the penalty;" so that they are, at birth, under condemnation, "subject to death, with all its miseries, spiritual, temporal and eternal."

Westminster Shorter Catechism, question 19: "All mankind by their fall lost communion with God, are under His wrath and curse, and so made liable to all the miseries of this life, to death itself and to the pains of hell forever."

Westminster Confession, Chapter VI. 6: "Every sin, both *original* and actual . . . doth, in its own nature, bring guilt upon the sinner, whereby he is bound over to the wrath of God and curse of the law, and so made subject to death, with all its miseries, spiritual, temporal and eternal."

The Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England (Calvinistic) IX.: "And therefore, in every person born into the world, it (original sin) deserveth God's wrath and damnation."

The French Confession, XI.: "We believe that this evil (original sin) is truly sin, sufficient for the condemnation of the whole human race, even little children in their mother's womb, and that God considers it such."

3. The inborn depravity of man is such that he is unable by his own strength to exercise repentance and faith.

Westminster Confession, Chapter XI. 3: "Man by his fall into a state of sin *hath wholly lost all ability of will* to any spiritual good accompanying salvation; so as a natural man, being *altogether averse* from that good and *dead in sin*, is *not able*, by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto."

Cunningham, The Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation, 558: "Calvinists believe that men, in their natural state of guilt and depravity, *are not able*, by their own strength, to repent and believe; and that God bestows only on the elect, and not on the reprobate, that special supernatural grace which is *necessary*, in every instance, to the production of faith, holiness and perseverance."

Hodge, Systematic Theology, II. 267: "In opposition, therefore, to the Pelagian doctrine of the sinner's plenary ability, to the semi-Pelagian, or Arminian doctrine of what is called gracious ability, that is, an ability granted to all who hear the gospel by the common and sufficient grace of the Holy Spirit, and to the doctrine that the only inability of the sinner is his disinclination to good, Augustinians have ever taught that this inability is *absolute and entire*. It is *natural* as well as *moral*. It is as complete, although different in kind, as the inability of the blind to see, of the deaf to hear, or the dead to restore themselves to life."

Shedd, Dogmatic Theol. II. 229: "This is the disability that is meant in the Westminster statement that man is utterly indisposed and disabled to all that is spiritually good. And this species of inability is *real* inability. It is not a figure of speech, but an impotence as *helpless* and *insuperable* by the subjects of it as *natural* inability. The substantive 'inability' has its full and strict meaning. The adjective 'moral' does not convert the notion of impotence into that of power, but only denotes the species of impotence. It is true that the 'cannot' is a 'will not,' but it is equally true that the 'will not' is a 'cannot.'"

Dabney, Syllabus, 597: "All man's faculties and susceptibilities now have a decisive and uniform, a native and universal, a perpetual and total, moral perversion, by reason of the utter revolt of his will from God and holiness, to self-will and sin; such that it is *impossible* for him in his own free will, to choose the spiritually good for its own sake."

But it is needless to multiply authorities in proof that according to the Augustino-Calvinistic system, the inability of the sinner is as real and absolute as that of a "dead man to sit up in his coffin," or that he is, at birth, obnoxious to the everlasting displeasure of God.

4. Accordingly regeneration, of which re-

pentance and faith are fruits, is and must be a work of God in relation to which man is "altogether passive."

Westminster Confession, Chapter X. 2: "This effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone, not from anything at all foreseen in man; who is *altogether passive* therein, until, being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit, he is thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it."

Hodge, Syst. Theol. III. 31: "Regeneration is an act of God. It is not an act which, by argument and persuasion or by moral power, He induces the sinner to perform. But it is an act of which He is the agent. It is God who regenerates. The soul is regenerated. In this sense the soul is passive in regeneration, which (subjectively considered) is a change wrought in us and not an act performed by us."

Shedd, Dogmatic Theol. II. 495,502: "Regeneration is solely the work of God. . . . Man is passive in regeneration. He cannot originate spiritual life. His relation to spiritual life is that of a recipient."

5. The decrees of election and non-election (preterition, rejection) are eternal and immutable, and the cause or reason of God's dealing as He does with individual men—of the bestowment of renewing grace upon some and of withholding it from others.

Westminster Confession, Chapter III. 4: "These angels and men, thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished."

Ib. 6: "As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath He, by the eternal and most free purpose of His will, foreordained all the means thereunto."

Ib. 7: "The rest of mankind God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of His own will, whereby He extendeth or withholdeth mercy as He pleaseth . . . to pass by."

6. These decrees were formed by God:

(1) In view of reasons, unrevealed and inscrutable, lying in His own nature—there being in men *nothing* to which He had respect in deciding to elect or not elect one man rather than another.

Westminster Confession, Chapter III. 5: "Those of mankind who are predestinated unto life, God . . . hath chosen in Christ . . . without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or *any other thing* in the creature, as *conditions*, or causes moving Him thereunto."

Cunningham, *The Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation*, 434: "The Calvinistic

doctrine is that in making the selection of some men, and in resolving to save them rather than others, God was not influenced by *anything* existing in them, or foreseen in them, by which they were distinguished from other men, or by anything known to or comprehensible by us, but only by His own good pleasure."

Hodge, *Outlines*, 206: "The decrees of God are sovereign in the sense that while they determine absolutely whatever occurs without God, their whole reason and motive is within the divine nature, and they are neither suggested nor occasioned by nor conditioned upon anything whatsoever without Him."

(2) In the logical order antecedent to and irrespective of *all personal action as foreseen*.

Calvin, *Ins. B. III.*, Ch. XXIII., 2, (*Italics are ours*): "In the first place they inquire, by what right the Lord is angry with His creatures who had not provoked Him by *any previous offense*; for that to devote to destruction those whom He pleases, is more like the caprice of a tyrant than the lawful sentence of a judge; that men have reason, therefore, to expostulate with God, if they are predestinated to eternal death *without any demerit of their own*, merely by His sovereign will. If such thoughts ever enter the minds of the pious, they will be sufficiently ena-

bled to break their violence by this one consideration, how exceedingly presumptuous it is only to inquire into the causes of the divine will; which is in fact, and is justly entitled to be, the cause of everything that exists."

Ib. Sec. 5: "All are not *created on equal terms*, but some are preordained to eternal life, others to eternal damnation; and accordingly as each *has been created for one or the other of these ends*, we say that he has been predestinated to life or to death."

B. III. XXIV. 17: "They also amuse themselves with the cavil, that since God is the Father of all, it is unjust to discard any one before he has by his misconduct merited such punishment. As if the kindness of God does not extend even to dogs and swine."

"Calvin here boldly declares that God regards and treats some men as *dogs and swine*, and *discards* them before they have merited such punishment by their misconduct." (Dr. H. J. Van Dyke.)

Mozley, *The Augustinian Doctrine of Predestination*, 393: "Augustine and Calvin alike hold an eternal divine decree, which, antecedent to all action, separates one portion of mankind from another, and ordains one to everlasting life and the other to everlasting punishment. That is the fundamental statement of both, and

it is evident that while this fundamental statement is the same, there can be no substantial difference in the two doctrines. This statement is the sum and substance of the doctrine of predestination."

Cunningham, *The Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation*, 548, 549: "And with respect to the idea which might naturally suggest itself, viz.: that final impenitence, or unbelief *foreseen* might be the ground or cause, not only of the positive or judicial act of foreordination to punishment and misery but also of the negative act of preterition, this Calvinists hold to be inconsistent with the Scriptural statements which so plainly ascribe the production of faith and regeneration, and of perseverance in faith and holiness, wherever they are produced, solely to the good pleasure of God and the efficacious operation of His Spirit, viewed in connection with the undoubted truth that He could, if He had chosen, have as easily produced the same results in others; and inconsistent likewise with the intimations plainly given us in Scripture that there is *something in God's purposes and procedure*, even in regard to those who perish, which can be resolved only into His own good pleasure."

WHAT STRICT CALVINISM INVOLVES.

If, now, these propositions are true, (1) that men are, at birth, under condemnation—"subject to death with all its miseries, spiritual, temporal and eternal," (2) that their inability to repent and believe "is as complete as the inability of the blind to see, or of the dead to restore themselves to life," (3) that eternal life is absolutely dependent upon repentance and faith, (4) that regeneration, of which repentance and faith are fruits, is a work of God in relation to which "man is *altogether passive*," (5) that God's action in regenerating some and leaving others in a state of unregeneracy, is the certain and necessary result of the decrees of election and preterition, (6) that these decrees are, in the logical order, antecedent to and irrespective of all personal action, having respect solely to pre-natal depravity and guilt, (7) that these decrees are eternal and immutable, and the number included in each "is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished;" if these propositions are true it is demonstrably certain that the eternal perdition of a part of the human race—all the non-elect—is not only certain, but *inevitable*, let them do what they can to obtain salvation, even in the way appointed in the gospel. For, since the eternal and immutable de-

cree not to extend to them saving grace was formed antecedent to and irrespective of their personal action, they *can do nothing* that will have a *favorable* bearing upon their eternal destiny; they cannot repent and believe; they cannot renew themselves; God himself cannot deliver them from their state of depravity and condemnation, for He cannot reverse His irreversible decrees. Their perdition is, therefore, as unavoidable as it would be if He had decreed to send them to hell on the day of their birth.

It is urged that “if it cannot be *proved* that any one of the non-elect ever did what he could to avoid punishment, it does not follow that they shall be damned, do what they can.” But it is a total mistake to suppose that there cannot be full warrant on the theory of strict Calvinism for saying that the non-elect shall be damned, do what they can, unless it can be shown that some one of this class did what he could to escape punishment. With as much right might it be urged that there can be no warrant for saying that men, unsupported, will fall to the earth, let them do what they can, unless it can be proved that some man, being unsupported, did fall to the earth in spite of all he could do. These are questions to be settled, not by experiment or observation, but by the laws of thought. Given three facts,—that man is a heavy body,

that he is unsupported, that the operation of gravity is universal—and it is self-evident that his fall to the earth is unavoidable, do what he can. So given three facts,—that man is, at birth, under condemnation to eternal death, that he is as impotent to save himself as “a dead man to restore himself to life,” that God determined by an unconditional and irrevocable decree not to save him, and it is self-evident that his damnation is inevitable, let him do what he can.

THE CASE OF THE NON-ELECT.

From what has now been said we see how, according to the theory under consideration, the case of the non-elect stands:

1. Since men are, at birth, under condemnation—“subject to death, with all its miseries, spiritual, temporal, and eternal,” the decree to refuse to regenerate and pardon leaves those included in that decree under sentence of condemnation on account of that sin, which necessarily involves their everlasting punishment. As the decision of an absolute monarch to refuse pardon to a rebel condemned to death is a positive decision to execute him, so the decision of God to refuse pardon to those who are at birth under His wrath and curse, on the ground of original sin, is a positive decision to ordain them to dis-

honor and wrath for that sin, whether they are appointed to die in infancy, or to live to the age of three-score years and ten. The decree not to elect and the decree to *punish* the non-elect for *original sin*, are inseparable, not only in fact, but in thought—they necessarily imply each other—they are, strictly speaking, parts of one and the same decree. If the advocates of this theory hold, as they generally or universally do hold at the present day,—that none of the non-elect will be punished forever *solely* because of their ante-natal guilt and depravity, it must be on the ground of the purely gratuitous assumption that it is the design of God to appoint *all* of this class to live till they shall have added the guilt of their own personal sins to that of original sin.

THE POSITIVE ELEMENT IN REPROBATION.

II. Thus far in our discussion we have considered only the negative element, so-called, of reprobation—preterition—the decree to pass by a part of mankind in the bestowment of renewing and pardoning grace. What is the relation of the purpose to leave men in the state in which they are born, to the purpose to punish them on account of their personal sins, which is called the positive element of reprobation?

1. The purpose of God to do nothing in the case of the non-elect—to leave them to them-

selves—does not imply a *positive* agency on His part in securing their continuance through life in impenitence and unbelief; nor the use of means designed to insure this result. The proper cause of their continuance in sin, is not the action, or inaction of God, but their own depravity.

2. But the purpose of God to forsake the non-elect—to withhold from them renewing grace—renders their persistence in sin as certain as if it were brought about by direct divine agency. For the inability of the sinner, at the beginning of moral action, to cease to resist the Holy Spirit, is the same as his inability to repent and believe, or to accomplish the work of self-regeneration—an inability which is declared to be “real and absolute,” “an impotence as helpless and *insuperable* by the subjects of it as *natural* inability.” All that the non-elect can do, under the influence of common grace, to obtain from God the ability to repent and believe, is not only necessarily vain, but will enhance their guilt and punishment,—the two essential characteristics of common grace being, that it never does or can save, whatever be the measure of it, or the duration of its action, and that it will greatly enhance guilt and punishment.

The decree of preterition, therefore, necessarily involves the positive decree of reprobation

on the ground of original sin in the case of *all* the non-elect, and of both original sin and personal sin in the case of those appointed to live to the age of moral accountability. The distinction, therefore, between the decree not to elect, and the decree of positive damnation is of no importance. "A determination to give being to a soul, and then to pass it by, when letting it alone will certainly damn it, is only *verbally* different from a direct and deliberate assignment to damnation" (Dr. Behrends). Mozley, Augustinian, Doctrine of Predestination, 393: "There is no real distinction between abandoning men to a certain state of which punishment will be the consequence, and ordaining them to that punishment. The only distinction which would make a difference respects the nature of the sinful state, whether it be original sin, or their own personal perseverance in sin. The abandonment of a portion of mankind to a state of sin in which they are born, is predestinarian reprobation, whether we express it as abandonment to sin, or as ordaining to punishment." Hence the damnation of the non-elect, in case they are appointed to live to the years of adult life, is as unavoidable as it would be if they were consigned to hell on the day of their birth, and inconceivably more terrible, since they can-

not but "treasure up wrath against the day of wrath and the righteous judgment of God."

All Protestant churches—Lutheran, Calvinistic, Arminian—reject the "abhorrent dogma of infant damnation." But is the dogma which teaches that God assigns *some* of the non-elect to hell in infancy *more*, or *less*, abhorrent than that which teaches that it is His purpose to appoint to *all* of this class a period of life beyond the age of infancy, and to punish them with increased severity because of their action in a state of inborn moral impotence as real, complete, absolute, as that of "the deaf to hear or of the blind to see"—having determined by an unconditional and irreversible decree, irrespective of their perseverance in sin as foreseen, to offer them no effectual help?

Now we would earnestly ask whether it is "to speak of God the thing that is right," or to ascribe to him *impossible* ways of action—ways self-evidently irreconcilable with the genius of the gospel and with a hundred of the plainest declarations of the Bible—to represent him as dealing with a part of the human race in such a way that their damnation is *inevitable*, let them do what they can to comply with the conditions of salvation as contained in the gospel? Were this representation correct the message of the gospel, instead of being "glad tidings" to *all*

people, would be to multitudes who hear it—apparently the majority of those who live beyond the age of infancy—the most dreadful tidings that ever fell on the ear of man.

EFFORTS TO AVOID THESE RESULTS.

III. Let us, now, indicate in the briefest manner possible some of the ways by which Calvinistic theologians attempt to avoid or to lessen the difficulties which the theory under examination involves.

1. There are some—and the number seems to be increasing—who hold firmly the doctrine of individual election, but reject that of preterition.

Schaff, *Creed Revision*, etc., 25: “The Scriptures clearly teach the comfortable doctrine of an eternal and unchangeable election of believers in Christ, but they nowhere teach an eternal decree of reprobation. The latter is merely an inference, but it is not a necessary inference.”

Hamilton, *A Bundle of Papers*, 134: “Preterition is no necessary part of Calvinism. . . . That God has chosen a people for Himself is a glorious truth; for, when interpreted, it simply means that I, as a believer, am what I am through the grace of God, dependent absolutely on Him for my salvation, and therefore sure of it. But to infer from this that God passes some

men by, arbitrarily leaving them to their fate, never giving them a chance, is impossible to any one who has caught the dimmest vision of Him who is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

But Dr. Shedd, expressing the view of the great body of representative Calvinistic thinkers, declares that "to affirm the decree of individual election and to deny that of preterition is the height of absurdity." And from this conclusion there seems to be but one possible way of escape, viz.: by denying the application of the fundamental laws of thought to the divine proceeding in predestination. For, "since the elect are such always, such unborn, such at birth, such in infancy," we are logically compelled to hold one or the other of two positions as to the standing, *as infants*, in the divine view, of the rest of mankind—those not included in the purpose of election, viz.: Either God purposes to pass them by, or He has no purpose whatever, concerning them. The latter position, however, is irreconcilable with the doctrine of decrees which is fundamental in every type of Calvinism. But as President Patton remarks, "to take an agnostic position in a matter so fundamental as that the whole is greater than its part, would require a revision of the Westminster Confession," and we

may add of every Calvinistic Confession, "more radical than has hitherto been dreamed of."

2. Another representation is that the reason of God's action in leaving some men to themselves—in withholding from them saving grace—is their abuse of "common grace"—their guilty rejection of offered mercy. But this is demonstrably inconsistent with the Calvinistic theory of predestination. For if God forsakes men—refuses to renew them—because of their guilty rejection of offered pardon, it must have been on the ground of such rejection as foreseen that he eternally purposed to leave them to perish in their sins. But the action of men in defeating common grace is dependent upon their reaching the age of moral accountability, and their reaching the age of moral accountability is dependent upon God's providential appointment, which providential appointment is a part of His dealing with them *as non-elect from the first moment of their pre-natal existence*. As God regards the elect as such always, appoints some of them to die in infancy and others to live to the age of responsible action, and then regenerates and sanctifies them, so he regards the non-elect as such always, appoints some or all of them to live to the age of responsible action, and withholds from them renewing grace according to His sovereign purpose. Since, then,

the appointment of the non-elect to reach the years of accountability is, in the logical order, subsequent to and dependent upon, the decree of preterition, it is as certain as any conclusion in logic that God's eternal purpose to withhold from them His almighty and efficacious grace, and consequently, His action in withholding from them that grace, could have had no respect, whatever, to their rejection of offered mercy as foreseen. Their personal sins as foreseen were the cause or reason of God's purpose to punish them, *but not of His purpose not to renew them.*

3. Another representation is that "as God decreed to impute Adam's disobedience to His posterity, because He knew that every one of them would, if in Adam's place, have acted as he did," so He decreed to pass by a part of mankind because He knew that they would, if dealt with under a system of gracious probation, reject offered pardon in spite of the most powerful agencies which He could wisely use in their case. But it is axiomatically certain that God could not act in the way and for the reason here suggested. For the decree to pass by, to reject, is an act of displeasure, and the holy God could not have, and so could not express, displeasure toward moral beings simply on the ground of what He knew they *would* do if placed in certain circumstances. It would not be justice,

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as much reason might it be said that, since the act of waking from sleep adds no faculties to the mind, men are "naturally" able to do when asleep all they can do when awake.

And still further, the changes involved in regeneration as set forth in the Bible, are such and so great, as to render it incredible that man has the natural ability to produce them. Whatever natural ability man has, in this direction, must lie in his will, as the faculty of volitions or of fundamental choices. But do the Scriptures teach that man is able, by an act of will, to dispel his spiritual darkness, to give himself a vision of Jesus Christ, to awaken godly sorrow for sin and supreme love to God, to originate a spiritual, divine life? All these things he must be supposed to be able to do, by his power of will; for the fundamental act of faith involves or presupposes all the subjective elements of eternal life.

QUESTIONS IN CONCLUSION.

In concluding this article we will suggest two questions which we design to discuss at some future time:

1. Are mankind, at birth, under condemnation—"liable to the pains of hell forever," on the ground of the fall of Adam?

The utter absence of any reference to the

Adamic guilt as among the grounds of the sentence of condemnation to be pronounced at the day of judgment, the language of Christ respecting little children—Luke xviii. 15,16; Matt. xviii. 10,14; and especially the teaching of Rom. iv. 25 and v. 18,19—seem to justify the position that, prior to personal action, men are, through the atonement, free from condemnation; that the judgment which through the one offense of Adam came upon all men to condemnation, was removed, absolutely and forever, by the one act of righteousness of Jesus Christ.

Dr. W. Lindsay Alexander, *A System of Biblical Theology*, 389-392: "Nothing can be clearer than this: As is the condemnation so is the justification; the one is co-extensive with the other; as the offense of one brought all men under the former, so the righteousness of one has brought all men under the latter. . . . As taught by the apostle it (universal justification) stands clear of the doctrine of baptismal regeneration and the doctrine of universal pardon. It means simply that through the grace of Christ the sentence of attainder under which the sin of Adam brought men has been repealed in the case of every man, whether baptized or unbaptized; but for the sins which men actually commit, they must each one seek pardon for himself or perish."

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THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD IN PREDESTINATION.

AS HELD BY MANY REPRESENTATIVE CALVINISTIC THEOLOGIAN.

IV.

In an article published in *THE STANDARD*, March 10, we endeavored to prove that the doctrine of God's sovereignty in predestination, as contained in the system of strict Calvinism, *necessarily* implies that the eternal perdition of a part of mankind—the non-elect—is not only certain but *inevitable*, do what they may to obtain salvation, even in the way appointed in the gospel. In demonstrating this proposition it was shown that strict Calvinism involves the following positions: 1. That in virtue of the natural or representative relation of Adam to his posterity, his fall was, in the divine judgment, really or virtually their fall. 2. That consequently mankind are, at birth, under condemnation, "subject to death with all miseries, spiritual, temporal and eternal." 3. That eternal life is dependent upon repentance and faith. 4. That the inborn inability of man to repent and believe is real and absolute, "as complete as the inability of the blind to see, or of the dead to restore themselves

to life.” 5. That regeneration of which repentance and faith are the fruits is a work of God in which man is “*altogether passive*.” 6. That God’s action in regenerating a part of mankind and in leaving the rest in unregeneracy is the certain and necessary result of the decrees of election and preterition. 7. That these decrees are, in the logical order, antecedent to and independent of all personal action as foreseen. 8. That these decrees are eternal and immutable, and the number included in each “is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished.”

If these propositions are true it is demonstrably evident that the eternal perdition of a part of mankind, all the non-elect, is not only certain, but *inevitable*, do what they can to obtain salvation, even in the way appointed in the gospel.

Our chief aim in this article is to demonstrate that the same doctrinal system necessarily implies that God is not moved by love and compassion for the non-elect in his offers of salvation, entreaties, expostulations, etc., and is not, therefore, dealing with them in good faith.

NOT MOVED BY LOVE AND COMPASSION.

I. There are differences of view among Calvinists as to God’s method of dealing with the non-elect.

1. According to one view it is by the power of the truth—apart from the direct action of the Holy Spirit—that He deals with the non-elect, enlightens their minds, convicts them of sin, and presses upon them the duty of accepting Jesus Christ as offered in the gospel. It is urged that “it is highly improbable that God, who does nothing in vain, should operate on men’s minds to produce effects which confessedly come to nothing, which are not so continued as to *end* in salvation,” and that the word of God which is declared to be “quick and powerful, and sharper than a two-edged sword, piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart,” is sufficient, under God’s general providential agency, to produce all the results of a moral and religious character which are known to exist in those who are never renewed.

2. Another opinion is that the Holy Spirit, not as a general rule, but in special cases, does, by His direct operation upon the non-elect, render the truth more effective in their illumination, and in convicting them of sin and leading them to avoid many sins and to practice many social and civil virtues.

Calvin B. III., Chap. XXIV. 8: “For there is a universal call by which God, in the external

preaching of the Word, invites all, indiscriminately, to come to Him, even those for whom He intends it as a savor of death, and an occasion of heavier condemnation. There is also a special call with which He, for the most part, favors only believers, when, by the inward illumination of His Spirit, he causes the word preached to sink into their hearts. Yet sometimes He also communicates it to those whom He only enlightens for a season, and afterwards forsakes on account of their ingratitude, and strikes with greater blindness."

Westminster Assembly's Larger Catechism, Q. 68: "All the elect and they only are effectually called, although others may be and often are outwardly called by the ministry of the word, and *have some common operations of the Spirit.*"

3. The doctrine most commonly held by Calvinists is that the Holy Spirit operates upon the minds of *all* men—at least of all who hear the gospel—heightening the natural power of the truth. Hodge Syst. Theol. II. 667: "The Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of truth, of holiness and of life in all its forms, is present with every human soul, enforcing truth, restraining from evil, exciting to good and imparting wisdom or strength, when, where, and in what measure seemeth to Him good. In this

sphere also He divides to every man severally as He will. This is what in theology is called common grace."

Shedd, *Dogmatic Theol.* I. 432: "Every human being experiences some degree of the ordinary influences of the Spirit of God. St. Paul teaches that God strives with man universally. He convicts him of sin and urges him to repent of it and to forsake it."

Among the additions which the Revision committee recommended to the General Assembly at its last session is the following statement: "The gospel declares the love of God for the world and His desire for the salvation of all men. It sets forth clearly and fully the only way of salvation which is through Christ alone; commands, exhorts and invites all to embrace offered mercy, and urges every motive to induce men to accept its gracious invitations. This free and universal offer of the gospel is accomplished by the Holy Spirit, striving with and entreating men to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. And they who continue to disobey the gospel perish by their own fault, and are wholly without excuse, because they have resisted the Holy Spirit and rejected God's gracious offer of eternal life."

DIFFICULTIES.

As regards the object which we have chiefly in view in this paper,—which is to prove that,

according to the theory of strict Calvinism, in inviting and urging the non-elect to accept eternal life as offered in the gospel, God cannot be regarded as moved by compassion for them, and therefore that He is not dealing with them in good faith,—it is not a matter of essential importance to determine which one of the views indicated above should be accepted; whether in dealing with this class God employs the truth alone, under the laws of His ordinary providential action, or whether the Holy Spirit operates occasionally or universally in connection with the truth, heightening its natural effect upon the understanding, conscience and heart. The supposition that it is solely by His providential action that God renders the truth effective in illuminating, convicting and persuading the non-elect, involves all the difficulties which would arise from supposing that the Holy Spirit operates also, occasionally, in furtherance of the same end; and the supposition that the Holy Spirit operates occasionally, involves all the difficulties which would arise from supposing that He operates universally.

1. It is universally conceded that God, by His providential efficiency, does use the natural light of reason and conscience, and the truth revealed in the gospel, in convicting the non-elect of sin and in pressing upon them the duty of accepting

the mercy offered in Jesus Christ. The question with which we are concerned at this point is not what the non-elect do under the influence of truth,—whether they ever strive to gain the favor of God in the way of His appointing, or whether their whole attitude is one of resistance to His will and defiance of His authority,—but why He deals with them in this way, having determined by an irreversible decree antecedent to and irrespective of their personal action as foreseen not to renew them, and knowing that, since their inborn inability to repent and believe, or to renew themselves, is a ‘bondage as terrible and remorseless as any imprisonment behind iron bars,’ their perdition is *inevitable*, do what they can, and knowing, also, that every act on His part, in pressing upon them the claims, invitations and encouragements of the gospel, cannot but enhance their guilt and damnation? Is it not certain that such a mode of procedure as this cannot be due to “divine mercy and love for their souls?” Is it not an inexcusable abuse of language to call anything bestowed upon sinners “grace,” an “expression of compassion,” the possession of which cannot but enhance their guilt and punishment, do what they can to use it aright? The fact that the inability of mankind is culpable—rendering them liable “to the wrath of God and the curse of the law”—does not

affect the question before us, whether the bestowment of "common grace," or "the means of common grace," is, or is not, "an expression of God's infinite mercy" for the non-elect. It is not the *character* of the sinner's inability, whether innocent or guilty, but its *reality* and *absoluteness* which it concerns us here to keep in mind. Would it be "an expression of love" on the part of a superintendent of an asylum for the blind, to those under his care, to take them to a picture gallery with the intention of exhorting and commanding them to open their eyes and to look with admiration on the masterpieces of the great artists, and of punishing them in case they should fail to obey him? Would it be an act of "mercy" on the part of a prince to spread a table with all manner of delicacies, in sight of a prisoner behind iron bars, with the design of inviting and commanding him to come forth from his imprisonment and to partake of the bounty provided for him, and of adding to the severity of his punishment in case he refused to do so? It is self-evident that, whatever might be the motive of the superintendent or of the prince, in the cases supposed, the feeling of love and mercy could not have been one of them. And so, if the theory of strict Calvinism is true in its teaching relative to (1) the absoluteness of the sinner's inability to save himself, (2) the

decree of preterition as prior to and irrespective of the foresight of the personal action of those included in it, and (3) the notion of common grace as enhancing the guilt of those who receive it, though insufficient to enable them to repent and believe, it is self-evident that God cannot be moved in His dealing with the non-elect by mercy and love for their souls. If the facts of their case are such as this theory supposes them to be, would not the least degree of compassion, if unrestrained, determine Him to send them to hell on the day of their birth, or to appoint them to be born idiotic, or, at least, to live and die in the densest darkness of paganism? Let us see if it is not logically necessary to answer this question in the affirmative.

(1) All that *strict justice* can require in the case of the non-elect is that they be appointed to die in infancy and to be punished forever for original sin. "Every sin, both *original* and actual . . . doth, in its own nature, bring guilt upon the sinner, whereby he is bound over to the wrath of God and the curse of the law, and so made subject to death, with all its miseries, spiritual, temporal, and *eternal*" (West. Con.).

(2) In case the non-elect are appointed to live to the age of responsible action, their guilt *must increase* with the increase of the years of their earthly existence. For their inability to cease

to sin, even for a moment, is as real and complete as their inability to cease to exist, which inability God decreed without consideration of their personal action as foreseen, not to remove.

(3) Every sin, even the smallest, “deserves damnation.” (West. Con. Chap. XV. 4.)

(4) God will render to all men according to their works, adjusting in the case of every one, penalty to ill-desert with infallible accuracy.

(5) The total penalty to which the sinner is obnoxious at the hour of death will be, therefore, greater or less according to the light possessed or attainable.

Now we affirm that these positions, if true (and we do not here call in question the truth of any one of them), logically compel us to deny that God is moved by love and mercy for the non-elect in appointing them to live to the age of moral accountability and in bestowing upon them common grace, or the means of common grace. If *justice* would be completely satisfied in the assignment of the non-elect to hell in infancy, what shall we call that principle in God which determined Him, having decreed in the exercise of His sovereignty not to renew and pardon them, to appoint them to live to the years of adult life, thereby rendering their subjection to an infinitely enhanced damnation *inevitable*! Is it not the height of absurdity to say

that such a mode of procedure as this is “an expression of God’s mercy and love for the non-elect?”

2. But still more impressive proof of the proposition which we set out to establish is involved in the view most commonly held by strict Calvinists on the ground of the teaching of the Bible and of the facts of experience and observation, viz.: that the Holy Spirit operates occasionally, or universally, with the truth, rendering it more effective even in the case of those who are never regenerated.

We challenge any man to suggest any valid reasons for the belief that God deals with the elect as a class, *prior* to His act regenerating them, in a manner *in any respect different* as regards the kind, or energy, or duration of the agencies employed, from that in which He deals with the non-elect as a class. There is no warrant for the commonly-received notion of “*special grace*” as distinguished in kind from “common grace” and from “regenerating grace.” The simple facts of the case are these:—Here are two classes of persons: in the one class, the elect,—there are certain so-called immediate antecedents of regeneration, being due to the action of God by His providence, truth, and Spirit upon their minds, and their action in response to His providential and gracious agency

as determined by the purpose of election. These "antecedents" are simply the volitions, feelings, etc., divinely appointed as a fitting preparation or condition of the bestowment of regenerating grace; they may be few or many, continued for an hour or for years, involving little or great distress of mind. As we stated in a former article, "At times the Holy Spirit flashes the illuminating and burning rays of divine truth into the soul, dispelling its darkness, starting into intense action the dormant principles of sin, setting the conscience on fire, awakening regret, shame, fear, remorse; appealing to the higher and nobler aspirations of the soul, which sin has not utterly destroyed, and which point the soul to the height whence it fell. Yet these manifold activities are not the new life, nor do they have any tendency to spiritual renovation. But in the midst of these various activities of reason, conscience, sensibility and will, beneath them all—below conscience itself—at the center of the soul—there is a divine touch, restoring the dead to life, opening the blind eyes, emancipating the enslaved will, and calling into exercise faith, repentance, hope, love, and every other spiritual principle of our being." In like manner, with the exception of the life-giving touch, the Holy Spirit, often operates upon those whom the strict Calvinistic theory regards as the non-

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He has created for dishonor during life and destruction at death, that they may be vessels of wrath and examples of severity, in bringing them to their doom, He at one time deprives them of the means of hearing the word, at another by the preaching of it blinds and stupefies them the more."

The late Dr. Van Dyke, Dr. Shedd's successor in Union Theological Seminary, declares (*Variations of Calvinism*, 44,45,) "that Calvin denies that there is any mercy whatever for the non-elect, holding that God has *excluded them from all access* to salvation . . . that according to his theory, the great majority of the human race are predestinated by an eternal *election* to destruction—they are *created* for this very purpose—and the only reason why the gospel is preached to any of these reprobates, is not any real desire or willingness on God's part for their salvation, but His active design is to harden and fit them for the destruction to which they are doomed."

Dr. Dabney remarks (*Princeton Rev.*, July 1878, p. 351), "It is significant that the Reformed divines of Turretin's school seem usually to conduct this debate on the assumption (sometimes tacit, sometimes expressed) that as God had no *volition* towards the salvation of the non-elect, so He could not have any propension or affection at all towards it."

In an article published in the *Herald and Presbyterian*, September 25th, 1889, Dr. Van Dyke uses the following language: "Now, I affirm, and challenge proof to the contrary, that our Confession does not contain one declaration of the infinite love of God for all men as it is revealed in the gospel, or one declaration of the infinite fullness of the gospel salvation as suitable, and offered to all sinners, or one declaration which comprehends, or even alludes to the teaching of Scripture on these points." And the explanation of the failure of the Westminster Confession and of the other early Reformed creeds, to teach explicitly, or by implication, God's love for all men, is found in the fact that their authors were compelled by the logic of the strict Calvinistic theory to deny His love for the non-elect.

It is of the very essence of this theory as expounded by Augustine, Calvin, and its advocates in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, that God loves the elect and them alone, that the provisions of mercy as revealed in the gospel were designed for them and for them only, and that these provisions are offered to mankind indiscriminately because such a method is best for securing the salvation of those for whom they were made. And no skill in statement, and no subtlety of logic can harmonize with this scheme

the current Calvinistic representations, based on the plainest declarations of the Bible, that God loves all men in the sense of having an infinite desire for the salvation of each and every one of them. "To escape the irresistible force of these declarations" (John iii. 16; I. Tim. ii. 4; II. Pet. iii. 9; I. John iii. 2; Rom. xi. 32), says Dr. Schaff, "Calvinists have resorted to the distinction between the *revealed* will of God which would save all men, and the *secret* will which would save a few. But that would put an intolerable dualism into the being of God and charge Him—*sit venia verbo*—with falsehood and deceit. This is logic with a vengeance, and it is irresistible from Augustinian premises."

3. Thus far in our discussion we have proceeded on the assumption that those whom this theory designates as non-elect, though the recipients of the same grace which is bestowed upon the elect prior to the act which regenerates them, never seek to gain the favor of God in the way appointed in the gospel, never strive to exercise the repentance and faith which the Bible requires. "It will be time enough," says Dr. Hodge, "for any man to complain when he fails to experience Christ's healing power, after having sought it as long, as earnestly, and as submissively to the directions of God's word, as its importance demands; or, even with the assiduity

and zeal with which men seek the perishing things of this life." Syst. Theol. II. 709, 710. But we challenge any man to suggest one valid reason for the belief that those whom this theory recognizes as the elect, ever perform, under the influence of the grace bestowed upon them while unregenerate, any moral or religious acts which, as regards the matter or spirit of them, are not performed by those whom the theory designates as the non-elect; or one valid reason for denying, or doubting that multitudes of the latter class (the non-elect) do seek salvation in the way of God's appointing with far greater earnestness and perseverance than do multitudes of the former class (the elect) whom God meets with His renewing and pardoning grace. It is important to see clearly the ground of the position here taken.

SPECIFIC GROUNDS STATED.

(1) The decrees of election and preterition are, in the logical order, antecedent to and independent of the personal action of men as foreseen.

(2) There is *no evidence*, Scriptural or rational, that there is any difference in the influence of the truth, or in the operation of the Holy Spirit on the minds of the members of these two classes—the non-elect, and the elect while unregenerate.

(3) Hence there can be no ground for believing that the action of the elect as a class differs in any respect from that of the non-elect as a class, under the influence of the truth and the ordinary operation of the Holy Spirit.

(4) If, then, those who are included in the purpose of preterition never seek eternal life in the way of the gospel, in response to the influence of common grace, we must believe that those included in the purpose of election never struggle and agonize to gain eternal life in response to the same influences and agencies.

(5) But that the elect do earnestly and perseveringly seek to escape destruction, do strive to come into right relations to God through repentance and faith, moved by the commands and invitations of the gospel and the action of the Holy Spirit, is abundantly evident from the statements of Scripture and from the testimony of the regenerate. Bunyan is surpassed by no uninspired writer in setting forth vividly and truthfully the influence of divine truth upon men, both the regenerate and the unregenerate, and their action under these influences. And he tells us that "the man put his fingers in his ears and ran crying, Life! life! eternal life! So he looked not behind him, but fled toward the middle of the plain;" and that when he tumbled into the slough of despond he "endeavored to

struggle to the side of the slough that was furthest from his own house and nearest to the wicket gate," and when he came to the gate and saw that over it was written, "Knock, and it shall be opened unto you," "he knocked more than once or twice, saying,

"May I now enter here? Will He within
Open to sorry me, though I have been
An undeserving rebel? Then shall I
Not fail to sing his lasting praise on high."

Are not the words of Newton true to the experience of multitudes of the people of God?

"Once a sinner near despair
Sought thy mercy-seat in prayer;
Mercy heard and set him free,
Lord, that mercy came to me."

President Davies: "It is only in the use of the means of grace that you can expect divine grace to work faith in you: never yet was it produced in one soul while lying supine, lazy, inactive."

Edwards: "Though God has not bound Himself to anything that a person does while destitute of faith, and out of Christ, there is great probability that in the way of hearkening to this counsel you will live, and that by pressing onward and persevering you will at last, as it were by violence, take the kingdom of heaven. Those of you who have not only heard the di-

rections given, but shall through God's merciful assistance practice according to them, are those who will probably overcome."

Shedd: "Salvation is in the highest degree probable for any person who earnestly and diligently uses common grace and the means of common grace . . . There is the highest encouragement in the Bible to pray for the regenerating grace of God. . . . To a person who inquires: How am I to obtain the new birth and what particular thing am I to do respecting it, the answer is: Find out that you need it, and that your self-enslaved will cannot originate it. And when you have found this out cry unto God, the Holy Spirit, Create in me a clean heart, and renew within me a right spirit, and this prayer must not cease till the answer comes." This is most admirable and scriptural advice; but query: How long would *one of the non-elect* have to pray before receiving the blessing of the new birth? It is, however, needless to multiply these testimonies.

FOUR LEGITIMATE MOTIVES.

There are four legitimate motives or principles of action to which the Holy Spirit appeals, in the use of the truth, in persuading sinners to seek the salvation of their souls: rational self-interest, the feeling of obligation, the natural prin-

ciple of gratitude, and the aspiration for something higher and better than the world can give.

(1) Self-interest, due regard for one's highest well-being, is a legitimate and divinely-implanted principle of action, and to be determined by it, in due measure, is an essential characteristic of rational beings in their unfallen state. It is as proper and right for a sinner to seek to shun eternal destruction as it is for him to seek to escape from a burning building. "That this natural self-interest is not in itself sinful, God himself shows when he addresses the warnings and invitations of His word both to men's hopes and to men's fears." It is impossible that there should be a more powerful appeal to the legitimate principle of self-regard than the Scriptures make in their offer of infinite good and in their threatening of infinite evil.

(2) Many are powerfully moved to strive to obey God by the feeling of obligation. Their conscience, quickened by the operation of the Holy Spirit, responds to the claims of divine law; they see and feel that to repent of their sins, to obey, and trust, and love God, is a most sacred duty, having its ground in His character and relations to them. Conscience, when enlightened, is a high and powerful principle of action, and to strive to obey its behest is not to act selfishly, or to act in defiance of the authority of God.

(3) The natural principle of gratitude often prompts the awakened sinner to respond to the gracious invitations of the gospel. The goodness of God leads, its tendency and design is to lead, men to repentance. The sight of the incarnate Son of God, uttering from the cross the cry of expiring love, has an immeasurable power of appeal to the heart when under the illuminating and quickening influence of the Holy Spirit.

“I saw One hanging on a tree
In agonies and blood;
He fixed His languid eyes on me,
As near His cross I stood.
O, never, till my latest breath,
Shall I forget that look;
It seemed to charge me with His death,
Though not a word He spoke.”

(4) Some are moved Godward by an aspiration for something higher and better than the world can give. Profoundly conscious of the emptiness and vanity of all finite things, bewildered by the mysteries and tragedies of life, the heart is moved by the gracious words coming down from the height of heaven, “Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.” Shedd, *Sermons to the Natural Man*, 216,—“Through the common influences of the Spirit of grace, and the ordinary workings of a rational nature not yet repro-

bated, man is at times the subject of internal stirrings and aspirations that indicate the greatness and glory of the heights whence he fell. Under the power of an awakened conscience, and the feeling of the emptiness of the world, and the aching void within him, man wishes for something better than he has, or than he is. . . The immortal, heaven-descended spirit, feeling the kindling touch of truth and of the Holy Ghost, thrills under it and essays to soar."

It is these principles, one or all, to which the Holy Spirit appeals through the instrumentality of the truth in the work of persuading men to seek the salvation of their souls, to accept of Jesus Christ as offered in the gospel. And we affirm our conviction that no substantial reason can be adduced for believing that the action as a class of those whom the theory of strict Calvinism regards as non-elect, under the influence of the commands and gracious appeals of the gospel and the operation of the Holy Spirit, is *in any respect different* from the action of the elect as a class, while in a state of unregeneracy; and that no substantial reason can be adduced for doubting or denying that multitudes of the former class seek God with far more earnestness and perseverance than do multitudes of the latter class, the immediate antecedents of whose regeneration are determined by the de-

cree of election. They use the means of grace, read the Scriptures daily, consult Christian friends and follow their counsel, strive to exercise repentance and faith, supplicate the Divine mercy with strong crying and tears for the grace necessary to render their striving successful, thus using all their natural powers to the utmost in seeking salvation in the way appointed in the gospel; yet all these efforts—due to the agency of the Holy Spirit—are infallibly and necessarily vain. For, since they cannot renew themselves, the eternal and irreversible decree not to renew them renders their eternal perdition as certain and unavoidable as it would be if it were brought about by a direct divine efficiency. And still further, these efforts are not only necessarily vain, they infinitely enhance the guilt and condemnation of the non-elect; and this infinitely enhanced damnation is the certain and *inevitable* result of God's *compassionate and merciful* action in granting the non-elect continuance of life and the illuminating and quickening influences of the gospel and of the Holy Spirit!

It needs to be carefully noted that in speaking of the elect and the non-elect we have exclusively in mind those classes as determined by the purposes of God formed irrespective of the

personal action of those included in them. If it were held that in forming these purposes God has respect to the action of men in the use of common grace and the means of common grace as foreseen, then of course it would not be true as stated above, that there are no valid reasons for believing that the action of the non-elect as a class differs, in any respect, from that of the elect as a class prior to their regeneration. But the theory under consideration denies such a relation of foreknowledge to decrees as this conception implies.

NOT IN GOOD FAITH.

II. This theory in denying virtually, if not explicitly, the love of God for the non-elect, necessarily impugns His sincerity and good faith in dealing with them.

God commands, urges and entreats all men to shun destruction and to accept of offered mercy, expresses the deepest compassion for them, promises them eternal life if they will comply with His requirements, and by the direct operation of His Spirit on their minds greatly heightens the power of appeal which these commands, entreaties, promises, etc., possess, in their own nature, to every rational and right principle of action. Now the good faith of God, in dealing

with men in this way, self-evidently implies two things:

1. The existence in Him of such a love for them, of such a desire for their salvation, as the expostulations, entreaties, promises, etc., naturally and necessarily imply.

2. The possibility of compliance with the terms of salvation on the ground (1) either of the purpose of election involving their regeneration, (2) or of their ability to renew themselves under the influence of common grace, (3) or of their ability so to use common grace and the means of common grace, as to render the bestowment of regenerating grace, if not certain or highly probable, at least *possible*. But we have shown that the logic of the theory under consideration, according to the exposition of its ablest defenders, denies the existence in God of love for the non-elect in the sense of a desire to save them. The logic of this theory denies, also, the possibility of the salvation of the non-elect. Since then God has no compassion for them, and since, also, their salvation is impossible in every sense of the term—naturally and morally impossible—impossible to them and impossible to God Himself—for He cannot reverse His irreversible decrees—for Him to invite them to come to Him in Jesus Christ, and to promise to receive them

graciously *if they will come*, is as manifestly irreconcilable with His sincerity as any course of action which the human mind can conceive of. To speak with the greatest moderation, He cannot but be regarded as *tantalizing* them with the offer of an infinite but impossible good. What should we say of the sincerity of the captain of a vessel who, seeing some men in the water in mid-ocean, should entreat them to avoid death by drowning, and to come on board his vessel, while having an inflexible purpose, formed irrespective of any request or action on their part, to withhold the aid absolutely necessary to render compliance with his invitation possible? What should we think of the good faith of a physician who, seeing a man faint, and well-nigh helpless from loss of blood from a severed artery, should urge him to avoid death by bleeding, and let the flow of blood be stopped, while having fully determined without consideration of what the sufferer would do, or would refuse to do, to let him bleed to death? Wherein does the conduct of the captain and the physician, in the cases supposed, fail to represent the action of God, according to the strict Calvinistic theory, in dealing with the non-elect, commanding and entreating them to flee from the wrath to come, and promising that "if they repent He will forgive them, if they believe He

will save them," knowing that without a certain kind of assistance—the bestowment of efficacious grace—they are as impotent to repent and believe as "a dead man to sit up in his coffin,"—which assistance He determined by an immutable decree not to grant, regardless of what it was foreknown they would do or would refuse to do in relation to His proposals of mercy? Whatever might be said of the *justice* of such a procedure in the case of those involved in sin and guilt, it certainly could not be regarded as *sincere and honest*. God does not deal even with the lost spirits in hell in this way, urging them to become reconciled to Him and thus to avoid His everlasting displeasure, for He knows that they cannot avoid His displeasure by any method of their own devising, and that He does not intend to provide for them a way of deliverance. And yet the salvation of the impenitent dead, and of the non-elect among the living, are equally impossible and impossible on the same grounds—the immutable decree of God not to save them, and their utter inability to save themselves.

To conclude the discussion of this point. According to the logic of the strict Calvinistic theory this is the condition of those of the non-elect who are appointed to reach the period of responsible action: 1. They begin their existence under

condemnation, “subject to death with all its miseries, spiritual, temporal and *eternal*.” 2. Involved in a moral bondage as “terrible and remorseless as any imprisonment behind iron bars.” 3. Abandoned in the decree of God to the state of guilt and depravity in which they are born. 4. As impotent to cease to sin as to cease to exist. 5. Yet illuminated and convicted of sin by the truth providentially enforced. 6. Their illumination and consequent culpability being immeasurably increased by the direct action of the Holy Spirit. 7. Every sin which they commit, even the smallest, rendering them “worthy of damnation.” 8. Even their efforts to escape perdition, however earnest and sincere they may be, being not only in vain, but sinful and greatly aggravating their doom. 9. Their inevitable and final damnation being, therefore, infinitely more dreadful than it would have been if they had been sent to hell in infancy. We ask again, in what respect would God treat them differently if He were moved by pure, unrestrained, infinite wrath?

But it is urged frequently and with great confidence that the doctrine of reprobation is no more inconsistent with the sincerity of God in His indiscriminate offers of mercy than is that of His infallible foreknowledge. We deny, however, that the difficulty of reconciling the good

faith of God in His indiscriminate proposals of mercy, arising from His foreknowledge of the final perdition of some of those to whom the proposals are made, is of the same order as that with which we are confronted on the strict Calvinistic theory of reprobation. God put holy angels on trial, knowing that its issue would be disastrous in the case of some of them; but His foreknowledge of this issue is not even apparently inconsistent with His sincerity in the use of means to prevent their fall; for they possessed plenary ability to stand firm in their integrity and were moved to do so by the most powerful influences which could be wisely brought to bear upon them. God was obliged by His absolute ethical perfection to deal with holy angels according to the most perfect method of moral trial, and if He could not prevent the apostasy of some of them, acting according to this method, then, their fall, and consequently His foreknowledge of it, are clearly consistent with His good faith in dealing with them. But if their fall were unavoidable, if Adam's inability to remain holy were as real and absolute as the inability of "the dead to restore themselves to life," then it would be self-evidently impossible to believe in the good faith of God in commanding perfect obedience and in enforcing the command by fearful sanctions. If, then, God offers

pardon and life to men and secures to them through the truth and the operation of the Holy Spirit, full ability to accept the offer or so to strive to accept it that they may be certain or may confidently expect that their striving will be blessed of Him with the blessing of renewing and pardoning grace, the fact of His foreknowledge that some would reject the proffered mercy, thus rendering their final condemnation morally necessary, can involve no question of His sincerity in His dealings with them.

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD IN PREDESTINATION.

AS HELD BY MANY REPRESENTATIVE CALVINISTIC THEOLOGIAN.

V.

It is our purpose in this article to apply to the case of infants dying in infancy and of the congenitally idiotic the positions of the Calvinistic system already discussed.

THE CALVINISTIC POSITION.

The question of the fate of those dying in infancy is one of vast theologic as well as of practical interest. For a large proportion—probably a distinct majority—of the human race pass out of the world before reaching the age of moral accountability. As to the future condition of this class there are three and only three positions which can be taken, viz.: 1. Either all are lost. 2. Or all are saved. 3. Or some are lost and some are saved. It does not seem worth while to consider a fourth position which was held by Dr. Watts. “In pure desperation, in the struggle between the necessities of his system and his feelings of pity and compassion, he

embraced the theory that reprobate infants are probably annihilated at death." He says: "The salvation of all children . . . has no countenance in the Bible . . . no foundation in reason. The Scripture brings down the infants of wicked parents to the grave, and leaves them there, and so do I. The Scripture has not provided any resurrection for them, neither can I do it."—*Ruin and Recovery of Mankind*. Question XVI.

Augustine held that infants dying before baptism are lost. The Romish church always taught that infants who pass out of the world without baptism cannot attain to eternal life. The canons of the council of Trent, which are an authoritative declaration of the faith of the church of Rome, teach: "If any one denies that newborn children must be baptized, or says that they do not derive from Adam anything of original sin which makes the laver of regeneration necessary to cleanse them for an entrance into everlasting life, let them be accursed."

Roman Catechism II. chap. II. Ques. 25: "Unless they are born again by the divine grace of baptism, they are brought forth by their parents, whether believers or unbelievers, for eternal misery and perdition."

The Augsburg Confession, the earliest doctrinal statement of the Lutheran church, says,

—Part First, Art. IX.—“Of baptism they teach that it is necessary to salvation. They condemn Anabaptists who allow not the baptism of children, and affirm that children are saved without baptism.”

In his pamphlet on “The Development of the Doctrine of Infant Salvation” Dr. Warfield says, p. 38 sq.,—that the five following views were early current among Calvinists: 1. “That death in infancy is a sign of election, and hence that all who die in infancy are the children of God and enter at once into glory.” 2. “That the only sure sign of election is faith with its fruits, and therefore, we have no real ground of knowledge concerning the fate of any infant; as, however, God certainly has His elect among them too, each man can cherish the hope that his children are of the elect.” 3. “That faith and the promise are sure signs of election, and, accordingly, all believers and their children are certainly saved; but that the lack of faith and the promise is an equally sure sign of reprobation, so that all the children of unbelievers, dying such, are equally certainly lost.” 4. “That faith and the promise are certain signs of election, while the lack of the promise only leaves us in ignorance of God’s purpose; nevertheless, there is good reason for asserting that both election and reprobation have place in this unknown sphere.”

5. "That faith and the promise are marks by which we may know assuredly that all those who believe and their children, dying such, are elect and saved, while absence of sure marks of either election or reprobation in infants, dying such, outside the covenant, leaves us without ground for inference concerning them, and they must be left to the judgment of God, which, however hidden from us, is assuredly just and holy and good." Dr. Warfield adds, "that this cautious agnostic view has the best historical right to be called the general Calvinistic one."

It is certain, however, that Calvin himself and many of the early Calvinists did not occupy an agnostic position as to the fate of uncovenanted infants dying in infancy. Institutes, Bk. III. Chap. XXIII. 7: "I inquire, again, how it comes to pass that the fall of Adam, independent of any remedy, should involve so many nations with their *infant children* in eternal death, but because such was the will of God. It is an awful decree, I confess, but no one can deny that God foreknew the future final fate of man before He created him, and that He did foreknow it because it was appointed by His own decree."

Commentary on Ezekiel XVIII, Opera IV. 167: "As to infants they seem to perish not by their own fault but by the fault of another; but there is a double solution. Though sin does not yet

appear in them, yet it is latent; for they bear corruption shut up in the soul, so that before God they are damnable."

Heidegger: "For original sin the penalty is eternal death; it is the penalty both of loss and of sense, the sense both of the worm and of the fire, though in some, as for example *in infants* it is milder, in others it is severer."

Cocceius: "Elect infants . . . are not conceived and born as are the children of the Gentiles, concerning whom the *presumption is certain*, that they with their mother's milk drink in godlessness unto destruction."

Marckius: "As to the infants of unbelievers, we ought *utterly to reject not only their salvation*, but also the theory that *their penalty is one of privation, without sensation*. The terminus to which these are predestined is *eternal death, destruction, damnation*." The above and numerous other similar Calvinistic testimonies are given in Dr. Krauth's "Infant Baptism and Infant Salvation." "The utterances of the divines at the Synod of Dort," says Dr. Krauth, "were of the most decided kind. Infant reprobation and the actual damnation of infants, were asserted in manifold shapes, and in all the public discussions of that body no Calvinist of any land uttered a word of doubt or of mitigation."

The late Dr. Van Dyke illustrated the revolu-

tion which has taken place in the views of Calvinists, and especially of Presbyterians, in regard to the future condition of infants, dying such, by two quotations; one from Dr. Twiss, moderator of the Westminster Assembly, and the other from Dr. A. A. Hodge.

Dr. Twiss: "If many thousands, even all the infants of Turks and Saracens, dying in original sin, are tormented by him [God] in hell-fire, is he to be accounted the father of cruelties for that?" Dr. Hodge: "In the history of the world since Adam, all the souls who have died before birth, or between birth and moral agency, have been redeemed in Christ. Through all ages,—from Japan, from China, from India, from Africa, from the islands of the sea,—multitudes, flocking like birds, have gone to heaven of this great company of redeemed infants of the church of God."

The question of the future condition of infants, dying in infancy, according to the strict Calvinistic system, must be determined by the essential positions of that system, viz.: 1. Mankind are by nature burdened with guilt and depravity—exposed to the everlasting displeasure of God. 2. In dealing with infants as with those who reach the age of moral responsibility, God acts as a sovereign, determining the destiny of each and every one in the exercise of an op-

tional power. 3. Regeneration is the exclusive work of God and is wrought in those and in those only who are embraced in the purpose of election. 4. In choosing men to eternal life God does not take into account as a reason or condition of his action *any thing* foreseen in them. 5. The decrees of election and preterition are eternal and immutable, and the number included in each is "so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished."

TWO IMPORTANT QUESTIONS.

The universal Protestant church agrees with Dr. Hodge in the view above expressed, and rejects with horror the dogma of infant damnation. This fact suggests two important questions to the discussion of which we invite special attention.

I. What proof, or even *presumption*, can the Scriptures afford, on the theory of strict Calvinism, that *all* infants dying in infancy are saved?

II. How can the *assumption* of universal infant salvation be reconciled with the Calvinistic theory of predestination?

These questions we will take up in their order.

INFANTS AS SUCH.

I. What proof, or even *presumption*, can the Scriptures afford, on the theory of strict Calvin-

ism, that *all* infants, dying such, are saved? The Calvinistic argument in support of the view that all infants, dying in infancy, are saved is, in substance, the following:

1. The language of Christ respecting little children as a *special class*, Luke xviii. 15,16—“They brought unto Him infants that He would touch them. . . . And He said, Suffer little children to come unto Me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt. xviii. 10,14.) The argument from this passage is thus stated by Dr. Shedd—Proposed Revision, etc., 89—“The Redeemer says this of infants *as such* and *because* they are infants, and, consequently, of *all* infants. When He says ‘Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven,’ He means that this kingdom belongs to them *as* poor in spirit, and consequently belongs to *all* the poor in spirit. No such declaration is made concerning the other classes of mankind. Infancy is the only age that is singled out by which to prove a membership in the kingdom of God from *the very age itself*. . . . With this teaching of revelation concerning the salvation of infants the Confession agrees. By positive assertion, it declares that there are ‘elect infants dying in infancy;’ and by total silence concerning non-elect infants dying in infancy it implies that there are none.”

Upon this argument of Dr. Shedd we remark:

(1) That the salvation of infants, as of adults, depends upon their election, and election according to Calvinism is, and must be, particular and individual. "Classical election is now, and ever has been, an Arminian doctrine, whether we think of classes of babes or classes of adults. The divine election is an election of individuals in both cases, according to the conception of the old Calvinists and the Westminster divines." (Briggs.)

(2) That if the language of Christ proves that infants *as such*, and, consequently, *all* infants are members of the kingdom of heaven, it proves that infants *as such*, and, consequently, *all* infants are elect, for election is the fundamental condition of the possibility of membership in the kingdom of heaven. But the theory of strict Calvinism teaches that the non-elect are such always, *such unborn, such at birth, such through infancy*. It is, then, impossible that Christ, according to this theory, could have taught that infants *as such*, and consequently, *all* infants are members of the kingdom of God.

(3) That if all who die in infancy are saved their early death, as foreseen, was, or was not, a reason or condition of their election. If it was a reason or condition of their election, then the Calvinistic dogma that there is *nothing* in

men which determined God to choose one man rather than another is annihilated. If it was *not* a reason or condition of their election, then those Calvinists who regard election as classical, in the case of infants dying in infancy, must hold that God chose unto eternal life an enormously large class of persons,—one-half the human race,—and yet, that, in including them all in the purpose of salvation, he did not take into account, as a reason or condition of his action, the only circumstance which belongs to them as a class, and which distinguishes them from the rest of the world, viz.: their early death. But if their early death as foreseen was not a reason or condition of their election, we would inquire, what possible ground there can be for the presumption, either that *all* of this class are elect, or that it contains a *larger number* of the elect than of the non-elect. If infants are under condemnation and exposed to eternal death; if God determines the destiny of each and every one of them in the exercise of an optional power; if those and those only who are elected can be saved; if *nothing*—not even early death—foreseen in those elected—had a place in the divine mind among the reasons or conditions of their election, *then it would seem morally certain that some, and highly probable that one-half of those dying in infancy perish.* Since,

then, all the non-elect are such in infancy, the language of Christ which is applicable to *all* infants, cannot furnish even the slightest presumption of the salvation of all infants dying such. Strange as it may seem, some strict Calvinists regard Jesus' words as including infants as a class "among the number of those who have a *right* to the blessings of the atonement." The Scriptures teach that those who believe on Jesus Christ have a *right* to the blessings of the atonement, for they have fulfilled the condition upon which God has graciously promised to bestow these blessings. And so elect infants who are regenerated in infancy might be said to have a *right* to the blessings of justification and eternal life. But what possible warrant can there be for saying that infants, *as such*, all being burdened with guilt and depravity on the ground of which they are under condemnation to eternal punishment, have a *right* to regeneration, pardon and the felicity of the heavenly world?

2. Another argument is based on what the Bible teaches of the analogy between Adam and Christ in Rom. v. 18,19;—"So then, as through one trespass the judgment came unto all men to condemnation; even so through one act of righteousness the free gift came unto all men to justification of life. For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even

so through the obedience of the one shall the many be made righteous.”

If this passage were held to teach that the condemnation which came upon all men through the disobedience of Adam was removed through the obedience of Jesus Christ, it could be urged as furnishing decisive proof of the salvation of all dying in infancy. But strict Calvinism denies this to be the teaching of the passage, and holds that all men are, before moral agency, in the same state of condemnation in which they would have been had no atonement been made; that those and those only are saved who are included in the purpose of election; that election, in the case of every individual, is a *secret* act of God's sovereignty as an optional power, and that the only *sure* sign of election is faith. It can find, therefore, in the analogy between Adam and Christ, not only no evidence that *all* infants dying in infancy are saved; it can find no evidence that *any* of them are saved.

3. Again, it is urged “that it is more congenial with the nature of God to bless than to curse, to save than to destroy.” (Charles Hodge.) But strict Calvinism teaches—at least a large part of the ablest representatives of this theory teach—that though it was optional with God to save all men, though He could have saved all without prejudice to the glory of any of His attributes,

He nevertheless decreed, in the exercise of His sovereign pleasure, notwithstanding "it is more congenial with His nature to bless than to curse, to save than to destroy," to curse and destroy forever a large part of the human race. A sovereignty of this kind self-evidently precludes all warrant for confidence as to the salvation of those who die in infancy, as based on the teaching of Scripture respecting the compassionate and merciful nature of God.

4. It is further urged that "since Christ died for all, we have reason to believe that provision is made for the reception of Christ by infants in some other way than by personal faith—this being a condition which they are incapable of fulfilling." But according to the theory under consideration the non-elect who reach the age of responsibility are as incapable of exercising faith, by their own strength, or of doing anything that will secure the grace necessary to enable them to exercise faith, as they were at the age of infancy. God decreed from eternity, irrespective of any action on their part, to withhold from them, during the first hour, the first day, the first year,—during the whole period of their responsible agency,—the assistance without which it is impossible for them to escape from their inherited bondage which is "as terrible and remorseless as any imprison-

ment behind iron bars." If non-elect *adults* perish, notwithstanding their *utter inability* to repent and believe, or to do anything that will render the bestowment of regenerating grace certain, or probable, or even *possible*,—an inability not due to personal wrong-doing, but inborn, there can be no reason whatever for inferring that those who die in infancy are saved without personal faith, because such faith is *impossible* to them.

WITH RESPECT TO THE DOCTRINE OF PRE-
DESTINATION.

II. If, now, strict Calvinism assumes, as it does assume in our day,—an assumption, however, let it be remembered, in support of which it cannot, consistently with its own principles, produce any Scriptural evidence—that *all* dying in infancy are saved, the question will arise, how can this assumption be reconciled with the view that God elects an exceedingly large class—not one of the non-elect dying in infancy—and yet, excludes from among the reasons or conditions of His action the only circumstance which marks them as a special class—their early death? There is but one conceivable or supposable method of reconciliation, viz.: the death of those who die in infancy must be regarded, like regeneration and its immediate antecedents, as a

divinely appointed result, or consequence, of their election. According to this conception the purposes of election and non-election must be viewed as embracing the individuals of each class (the elect and the non-elect) from the beginning of their existence in the womb,—since some die the very hour in which they begin to live,—and must be viewed as determining all the acts of God by His providence and Spirit in relation to them. Of the *elect* it was determined: (1) That some—one-half the human race—should die before or soon after birth. (2) That others, numbering many millions, should be born idiotic, and should live beyond the age at which responsibility begins in the case of those who are mentally competent at birth. (3) That the rest—few as compared with those who die in infancy—should live for a period, longer or shorter, after reaching the age of accountability. Of the *non-elect*, however, it was determined that *all* should be born in a condition of mental soundness, and should live beyond, or up to, the commencement of moral agency.

In this conception we have a clear and adequate solution of the problem in hand—the reconciliation of the assumption that all who die before or soon after birth, are saved, with the position that in decreeing to save a part only of mankind God did not take into account as “conditions,” or “moving causes” of his action, “any

thing foreseen in them"—“*any thing* by which they were distinguished from other men.” This idea renders the whole subject before us luminous. Of the *elect* some die in infancy, and some are congenital imbeciles—their early death and congenital imbecility being due to their election, which is the determining principle of all God’s acts in relation to them from the first moment of their existence; but of the *non-elect* none are appointed to die in infancy, or to be born idiotic—their exemption from early death and from congenital idiocy being rendered certain and *necessary* by the decree of preterition.

This view we suppose to be the one most commonly held by strict Calvinistic theologians at the present time, as it is the only view which can reconcile the assumption of the universal salvation of infants with their theory.

Dr. Warfield: “That they die in infancy is not the *cause*, but the *effect* of God’s mercy towards them.”

Dr. Candlish: “It is on account of His atonement that infants die. Their salvation is therefore sure. Christ has purchased for Himself the joy of taking them, while yet unconscious of guilt and corruption, to be with Him in paradise. That any little children at all die,—that so many little children die,—is not the least among

the benefits that flow from His interposition as a Saviour."

This opinion was held by Zwingli; Bishop Hooper, Toplady, and many others among the earlier Calvinists, and "has of late," says Dr. Warfield, "become the ruling view."

This conception gives the adherents of Calvinism who assume that *all* infants dying in infancy are saved, a way of escape from two otherwise insuperable difficulties: 1. The hopeless task of attempting to find evidence of the salvation of *all* infants, dying in infancy, in the representations of Scripture which apply to infants *as such*, that is, to *all* infants, a vast number of whom are *non-elect*, and whose salvation is, therefore, impossible. 2. The equally hopeless task of rendering it conceivable, or credible, that God included in the purpose of election *all* who die at an early age, and yet, excluded from the "conditions" or "causes" of His action in their election, the *foresight* of their early death.

That all infants dying in infancy are saved, and that their early death is due to their election, are of necessity *pure assumptions*, admitting, on the Calvinistic hypothesis, no proof either rational or biblical. But since the first assumption is made by all Calvinists at the present time, and since the second is rendered logically necessary by the first, it will be instruct-

ive to consider, in the light of these assumptions, the doctrine of sovereign predestination in its *mildest form*.

THE ACCEPTED VIEW EXAMINED.

God purposed to create, mediately or immediately, the individuals of the human race, and then, regarding them from the first moment of their existence as burdened with guilt and depravity, and condemnation to eternal death, on the ground of their union, real or constructive, with Adam, and excluding from the reasons of His action all points of difference between them (of moral difference there can be none, while unborn, or before the age of responsible action, and foresight of any difference resulting from personal action being consequent to and dependent upon the divine purposes), He decreed to bring some of them to the blessedness and glory of the heavenly world—which decree determined all His acts in relation to them, before and after birth, their discipline before regeneration, their regeneration, sanctification, glorification, etc.; and, on the other hand, decreed to reject the rest—to withhold from them that almighty and effectual grace which is necessary in every instance to the production of repentance and faith,—the essential conditions of eternal life,—which decree is, in like manner, the deter-

mining principle of all His acts in relation to them from the beginning of their existence until and after death. The chief logical conclusions of this doctrine have been indicated, but they may be stated more fully as follows:

1. All infants are regarded by God as elect or non-elect (reprobate) from the first moment of their existence.

2. The decree of election rendered all included in it liable to be appointed to an early death—a liability which becomes a fact in the case of one-half of the human race.

3. The purpose of election also rendered all included in it liable to be appointed to be imbeciles—a liability which also becomes a fact in the case of many millions.

4. The decree of election also rendered those included in it liable to be appointed to live beyond, or up to, the beginning of moral agency—a liability which becomes a fact in the case of a number vast, indeed, but small as compared either with those who die in infancy, or with the non-elect.

5. The decree of preterition *necessarily* frees all embraced in it from liability to an early death, or necessarily involves their appointment to live to the age of moral action.

6. The decree of preterition also frees all embraced in it from liability to congenital imbecil-

ity. It is true that most of those included in the purpose of election are appointed to be born in a condition of mental soundness; but the difference between the two decrees, in this particular, is, that while the elect may, or may not be free, the non-elect *must* be free, from congenital imbecility, that is, if all infants are to be saved.

7. The decree of preterition renders it impossible for God Himself to do anything, at any period of their life, for the salvation of those who are included in that decree.

8. The decree of preterition, since it presupposes original sin, and has respect to, and is justified solely on the ground of, original sin, *necessarily* involves the decree to punish the non-elect for that sin, "which deserves eternal damnation."

QUESTIONS SUGGESTED.

The consideration of this scheme suggests, among other questions, the following:

1. Does it not seem extraordinary, that, though more than half the human race are elected, all, or nearly all, the elect in heathen lands, and the vast majority of the elect in Christian lands, are appointed to an early death, and appointed to an early death *because* of their election; whereas if they had been appointed to live to the age of adults, by far the larger part

of the world's population, from the beginning of history, would have consisted of regenerate persons?

2. Does it not seem most extraordinary that that which of all calamities is universally regarded as the most terrible—congenital imbecility—should be due to the blessing of election?

3. Does it not seem most extraordinary that *all* the non-elect should be appointed to live to the period of responsibility, considering the fact that their damnation is not only certain, but *inevitable*, do what they can to secure eternal life, even in the way appointed in the gospel, and the further fact, that their guilt cannot but increase with the increase of the years of their life, thus rendering their final doom infinitely more dreadful than it would have been if they had been sent to hell on the day of their birth?

4. Is the early death of infants—of one-half of the human race—due to their election, or may not this result be due to the fact, infallibly known to God, that He could not save them, under the wisest method of providential and gracious action, in case they were appointed to live to the years of responsibility? According to this supposition their early death would be the indispensable condition of their participation in the mercy of God, and not an effect of His mercy already bestowed upon them in their election.

5. Is there any Scriptural warrant for the application of the doctrines of election and non-election to infants? Or are infants, *as such*, and consequently, *all* infants, being freed from condemnation through the atonement, embraced in the infinite love of God in the sense that had any of those who perished in the years of responsibility been appointed to die in infancy they would have been saved?

There is but one passage of Scripture [Rom. ix. 10-12] which affords any apparent support to the dogma of infant reprobation; but the great body of the most competent interpreters do not teach that eternal results are involved in the original prophecy concerning Jacob and Esau. Dr. Hovey—Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans ix. 12—"To the question whether God's elective purpose regarding Jacob and Esau had reference to their temporal condition or to their eternal state, we should answer that, according to the apostle's representation, it had primary reference to their temporal state, and not so much to them as individuals as to their descendants. Paul certainly does not affirm in the next verse that Jacob was elected to eternal salvation and that Esau was reprobated to eternal death, but 'the elder shall serve the younger.' . . . We do not feel called upon to settle the eternal state of these individuals."

Godet—Commentary on Romans ix. 13—“In speaking of Jacob and Esau, either as men or nations, neither Genesis nor Malachi nor St. Paul has *eternal salvation* in view.” Schaff, Creed Revision, p. 26—“What is said in the same chapter about God loving Jacob and hating Esau, refers to their representative places in the history of Israel, but not to their eternal destination.”

SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD.

PART II.

By Prof. ROBERT WATTS, D.D., LL.D.

WITH

DR. NORTHRUP'S REJOINDER,

AND

DR. WATTS' REPLY.

SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD.

CHAPTER I.

REALLY ARMINIANISM.

FIRST PAPER.

To the Editor of the Western Recorder:

DEAR SIR—The copies of *The (Chicago) Standard* containing Dr. Northrup's criticisms on the Calvinistic system have at length come to hand. From your account of the views propounded in the Doctor's critique, I had expected a formidable arraignment of the very foundations of Theism in a philosophical discussion respecting "the nature of God." You may imagine my surprise on finding that instead of such a discussion, the articles published in *The Standard* are simply an attack on the Calvinistic system. It is true these articles proceed upon the assumption of a particular view of the divine nature, and involve, ultimately, the discussion of the question, "What is God?" But I certainly had reason, from the account given me of the subject of the President's remarks, to look for a fresh, scholarly, philosophical, and logical disquisition

on the being and attributes of God. This, however, I now discover, the author of these articles has not attempted. Had he done so we should be in a better position to judge of the claims of the doctrinal system he espouses and of its congruity with the essential elements of Theism as set forth in the sacred Scriptures and revealed in the moral constitution of man. Nevertheless, as already stated, we may gather the author's views of the divine attributes from the objections he urges against the leading features of the Calvinistic system.

His chief objection to the Calvinistic doctrine of Predestination is, that according to it, "the perdition of a part of mankind—the nonelect—is not only certain but inevitable, let them do what they can to obtain salvation, even in the way appointed in the Gospel." One would think from the confident tone of the writer that this objection had never been heard of, or properly presented, prior to the publication of these articles. As a matter of fact, however, it has figured as the most potent of all the objections urged by all classes of opponents against the Calvinistic system throughout the history of the controversy. Indeed, it is, in its substance and essence, the objection which the Apostle Paul felt called upon to meet as likely to suggest itself in opposition to the economy of grace as

elaborated in his epistle to the Romans. The principle objected to is the one on which God has acted in His dealings with Israel. The apostle vindicates God against the charge of unfaithfulness toward His people by affirming that those cast away were not His people whom He *foreknew*. Not one of them has been cast away. He assures Elijah that He had, amid the all but universal apostacy of which the prophet complained, *reserved* to Himself seven thousand men who had not bowed the knee to Baal. Seizing upon this historic illustration of the principle of the divine procedure in the administration of the covenant of grace, the apostle would have us know that the principle is regulative in the economy, and not limited to the days of Elijah. "Even so then," he adds, "*at this present time* there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then it is no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace; otherwise work is no more work. What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election (*i. e.*, the elect), hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded (according as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear) unto this day." (Romans 11.)

The doctrine propounded in this chapter is that all Israel shall be saved, and on referring to chapter ix, we find that by Israel the apostle does not mean the lineal descendants of Abraham as such. He is careful to foreclose all risks of misapprehension on this point. "They are not all Israel," he says, "which are of Israel; neither because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children; but in Isaac shall thy seed be called. * * The children of the promise are counted for the seed." The children of the promise, be it observed. That is, children yet to be, and to be brought into being by the divine agency in the fulfillment of the divine promise, and whose relations to the covenant were not determined by their works, as the apostle points out by referring to the cases of Jacob and Esau, but determined by the sovereign purpose of God, in order that it might be shown that the choice was "not of works, but of Him that calleth." In a word, the history of God's dealings with Israel is one continuous illustration of the very doctrine which President Northrup sets himself to challenge and to overthrow. What he calls in question God claims the right to do in His word, and, as the history of His dealings, not only with Israel, but with the entire race of man demonstrates, He does in the course of His providential administration. He

claims the right to have mercy on whom He will have mercy, and compassion on whom He will have compassion, and is under no obligation to have mercy upon any, as is manifest from the fact that salvation is not of debt, but of grace. If the apostle had framed this argument for the express purpose of meeting Dr. Northrup's objection, both as regards the sovereignty of God and the claim advanced by him on behalf of human works, he could not have made the refutation more complete. It is too late in the history of God's dealing with our fallen race to allege that he could not, righteously, choose some as the subjects of His saving grace and destine others to death because of their sins. All history, sacred and secular, negatives any such assumption. He who challenges God's right to do so should cease to speak of the economy of redemption as an economy of grace. Mr. Wesley, in his "*Predestination Calmly Considered*," denies that God might have justly passed by man when he fell. As an Arminian he speaks consistently with his theory, but having taken this ground, he has no right to speak of the divine interposition as an act of grace. If God might not, in justice, have passed by man when he fell, He would have done him an injustice to have passed him by, and when, instead of passing him by, He visited him, He was simply per-

forming toward him an act of justice. Surely it was a gross misuse of language to call such interposition an act of grace. Arminians are ever claiming that they are pre-eminently the advocates of "*free grace*," but their principles, now advanced by President Northrup, prove, to a demonstration, that the claim is absolutely destitute of warrant either in the nature of the economy or in the history of its administration.

In my next I shall raise and discuss the question, whether the primary objections against the sovereign predestinating act of God do not involve the objector in all the difficulties urged against the Calvinistic doctrine, and lead, logically, to blank Fatalism.

Belfast, Ireland, August, 1892.

CHAPTER II.

REALLY ARMINIANISM.

SECOND PAPER.

To the Editor of the Western Recorder:

DEAR SIR—In my article of last week I pointed out the fact that, though President Northrup does not formally discuss the subject of “the nature of God,” but, instead thereof, makes an attack on Calvinism; he, nevertheless, is constrained to assume the Arminian theory of the divine nature, which is not in harmony with the teaching of the Word of God in regard to the history of His dealings with Israel and the whole human race. What Dr. Northrup and Mr. Wesley say God cannot do, and be just, all history, whether sacred or secular, testifies that He has done and is still doing. I have given Paul’s argument in the Epistle to the Romans, but only in part. In fact, to present the argument in all its fullness were simply to rewrite both Testaments, and to make drafts upon the secular history of mankind for which you have not space and for which I have not time. It is too late in the history of redemption to challenge the sovereignty of God in the choice of the vessels of

mercy out of a race which are by nature children of wrath. God claims it is His prerogative in His Word, and He does it now, and ever has done it, in His providence. Let one additional testimony suffice. Having described the state of the church at Ephesus as blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, the apostle proceeds to give an account of the economic reasons which led to their having been raised to this estate. Their elevation was not an afterthought in the divine arrangements. Those spiritual blessings had been bestowed upon them in pursuance of a purpose entertained toward them before the foundation of the world. Paul's words are as strong as any words ever (written or uttered by John Calvin: "According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children of Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved." (Ephes. 1:3-6.)

Is there any room here for discussions such as President Northrup has raised? Can the divine sovereignty in the choice of these saints at Ephesus be called in question without calling in question the inspiration of the Apostle Paul?

These saints were chosen before the foundation of the world, and the ground of this ancient choice is declared to have been simply the good pleasure of the divine will, and that they, as predestinated and adopted sons, should be to the praise of the glory of His grace. They were not chosen because of their holiness or blamelessness, but, on the contrary, they were chosen that they should be holy and without blame; the choice did not arise from their subjective spiritual estate, but their subjective spiritual estate was the result of the antecedent divine choice. Neither were they chosen because of their freedom from guilt, but, on the contrary, they were chosen in order that they should be made free from guilt. It was not because of their doing what they could to obtain salvation, as President Northrup puts it, that they obtained it, but it was the election, as Paul puts it, in a passage cited in my last, that obtained it: "Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded." (Romans 11:7.) Put "Israel's seeking" where Dr. Northrup puts "let them do what they can to obtain salvation," and you have placed in vivid contrast the Pauline and the Arminian theories of the economy of grace. The two systems are in irreconcilable antagonism. Say what they will, the Arminians cannot

reconcile their views of the ground of the divine choice of sinners of mankind to eternal life, with the uniform testimony of the sacred Scriptures, that salvation is not of works, but of grace.

But not only is this doctrine of the Divine Sovereignty a doctrine which gives caste and character to the economy of redemption, it is a doctrine and indeed the only doctrine in harmony with Christian experience. Will Dr. Northrup be good enough to give his readers an analysis of the experience through which a sinner passes when under conviction of sin? What does such conviction mean? Is it not a fact that the subject of the conviction is fully persuaded that he is guilty before God, and justly exposed to the divine wrath, and that God might justly inflict upon him the dreadful penalty of the broken law? Does there ever enter as an element into his experience the idea that God might not justly pass him by, or that because of his doing what he can to obtain salvation, He is bound, in justice, to visit him in mercy and bestow upon him the salvation he seeks? We may stake the issue of the case here in controversy upon the answer which all men who have passed through the spiritual pangs of genuine conviction of sin will give to these questions. No man who has been brought by the regenerating action of the Holy Ghost to see sin in the light of God's law

and justice, and to see that both the law and the justice of God demand that sin be punished, and that such punishment is his own personal desert, will venture to say that he has claims upon God to extend to him His pardoning mercy. But if this be the universal experience of Christian men, what becomes of the theory which challenges the divine sovereignty in the dispensation of divine grace toward sinners of mankind? Condemned by the testimony of Scripture, it is also condemned by the testimony of all men who have passed from death unto life, as soon as they analyze their own experience under the illumination of the Holy Ghost, and it is only by overlooking or forgetting that experience that the redeemed and regenerated can bring themselves to challenge the Calvinistic doctrine which recognizes the sovereignty of God in redemption, and claims for Him, as His Word does, the right to have mercy upon whom He will have mercy, and compassion upon whom He will have compassion.

Dr. Northrup's chief objection to the divine sovereignty in predestination is, that it "necessarily implies that the eternal perdition of a part of mankind—the nonelect—is not only certain, but inevitable, do what they can to obtain salvation, even in the way appointed in the

Gospel." This raises the question I promised to discuss. The question is this: "Is the issue of the present economy less certain, or less inevitable, according to the Arminian theory than it is according to the Calvinistic?" This question admits of but one answer where the omniscience of God is recognized. If Dr. Northrup denies that God sees the end from the beginning, and that known to Him are all His works from the beginning, with him controversy on my part must end. If, however, he holds as Mr. Wesley, despite his Arminianism, did, as against Dr. Clarke, that God's knowledge embraces the future as well as the past history of the universe, the question forces itself upon him, Could He know that future if it were not certain and inevitable? Can God know the issue of the economy of redemption, both in regard to those who shall be saved and those who shall be lost, if it were not certain who are to be saved and who are to be lost? What, then, does the Arminian gain by rejecting the doctrine of decree? There are no degrees of certainty in regard to a matter whose eventuation is certain and known by God as certain. The certainty, therefore, is as great according to the divine omniscience as it is according to the divine decree. The Arminian, therefore, gains nothing.

In my next I shall endeavor to show that by holding to the omniscience and rejecting the divine decree he must land in blank Fatalism.

Belfast, Ireland, August, 1892.

CHAPTER III.

DIVINE DECREE OR FATALISM.

THIRD PAPER.

To the Editor of the Western Recorder:

In my last article I pointed out the fact that the doctrine of the Divine Sovereignty, in the choice of the vessels of mercy, was as definitely stated and as emphatically affirmed in the Scriptures as in the Calvinistic system now assailed by Dr. Northrup. I also carried an appeal in behalf of that doctrine to the bar of Christian experience, raising the question, whether any one who has been thoroughly convinced of sin, had, while under such conviction, the persuasion that, despite his felt exposure to the divine wrath, he had a claim upon the divine mercy? Such persuasion has no place in Christian experience, and this one feature of the effect of the Spirit's work upon the soul in conversion, is fatal to the whole Arminian scheme. It is impossible to reconcile the experience of men when under conviction of sin, with the Arminian doctrine, that God might not, in justice, pass the sinner by; and the reason is that conviction of sin is persuasion

of guilt, and to be persuaded of guilt is, as already stated, to be persuaded of just exposure to the wrath of God. Surely if Christian experience in the transition from death to life is to have a voice in the decision of this turning point in the controversy, the verdict must be the affirmation of the sovereignty of God, who instead of inflicting the merited penalty—the penalty to which the sinner himself is fully convinced he is justly exposed—extends the golden sceptre of His grace to the self-condemned culprit.

(It was also pointed out in my last that the objection urged by Arminians against the Calvinistic doctrine of the sovereignty of God in singling out the vessels of mercy, lies, with equal force, against the Arminian theory, which, while rejecting the decree of election, on the ground of the certainty of the result decreed, admits the omniscience and consequent foreknowledge of God. This is manifest, as the result is as certain according to the foreknowledge as it can be according to the decree. The chief ground of the Arminian objection to the divine decree is, that it renders the event certain and inevitable, and when an event is certain to eventuate, it is alleged that the agent by whom it comes to pass cannot be a free agent. Of course there is nothing gained here by the

Arminian who admits that God's knowledge embraces all the future history of the universe, and, beyond all peradventure, the entire issues of the economy of redemption to the minutest detail. That future history could not be known unless the events it embraces were certain to occur, and if they were certain to occur, must it not follow that the Arminian, who admits the foreknowledge of the event and, consequently, the certainty of its occurrence, has to encounter his own objection, which assumes that certainty is irreconcilable with free agency?

But further, it was intimated that whereas nothing is gained by denying the decree, and no difficulty solved or avoided by substituting for it the doctrine of the divine foreknowledge, the denial of it involves the objector in a difficulty immeasurably greater than that which he sought to escape, and which he imagined was chargeable upon the Calvinistic system alone. In a word, as intimated, by rejecting the decree while admitting the foreknowledge of God, he has shut himself up to the dread alternative of blank Fatalism, which rules God out of the empire of moral agency. According to what the objector to the decree teaches, the only relation which God sustains to the events which are to transpire in the future history of His own universe is that He knows they undoubtedly shall come to pass

at the times, in the places, in the order, and by their respective agencies, exactly as foreknown. Regarding all that shall take place within the domain of free moral agency, and especially within the sphere of the kingdom of grace, He simply knows what will happen. Reject the doctrine of the decree, and this is the sole alternative. The question therefore arises, as the whole future is known by God, and therefore certain, and therefore *determined*, by whom, or rather by what, has it been determined? The objector has ruled out God, let him bring forth his substitute. If by his theory he has dethroned the omniscient Jehovah, surely he cannot leave the throne of the universe vacant. I have more faith in my Arminian friends than to think that they will venture to carry out their principles to their legitimate consequences and proceed to place upon the august seat of the Divine Majesty as a substitute for the omniscient God any of the principalities or powers of the celestial array. They have placed themselves in a dilemma out of which their principles will not permit them to escape. They have on the one hand a vacant throne, and on the other an absolutely determined future. That is, they have to account for a determined future while their principles will not admit the existence, or counsel, or action of any intelligent personal

determiner! Is it not manifest that an absolutely determined series of events, concatenated and linked together by no supreme intelligence, whether divine, angelic, or human, must be referred to nothing save blind, relentless Fate?

But this is not all. Denying the sovereignty of God within the sphere of redemption, the Arminian must refer to this blind Fate the determination of the issues of the economy. As foreknowledge embraces and has embraced from all eternity the knowledge of those who shall be saved and of those who shall be lost, and as the Arminian denies that God has determined to save the elect and to pass by the nonelect, it must follow that the whole arrangements for the calling, justification, and glorification of the elect, including the death of Christ and the office-work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration and sanctification, can be ascribed to no efficient, determining cause, save the soulless, passionless, unintelligent idol—Fate. Is it necessary to point out the bearing of such a theory upon the glory of the Divine Author of our salvation, by whose determinate counsel and foreknowledge Christ was betrayed and put to death? or its bearing upon the work of Christ both in His life and in His death? or upon the work of the Holy Ghost in quickening dead souls into spiritual life and maintaining the life He imparts

until it expands and matures in the presence of the glorified Redeemer, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing? Carried fairly and fully out, the theory cannot admit decree, or intervention, or anything beyond "moral suasion," at any stage of the economy. It is irreconcilable with the clearly revealed fact, that while our Redeemer was put to death by wicked hands, He was delivered to that death in accordance with, and in pursuance of, a purpose entertained before the foundation of the world. It cannot be reconciled with the fact that the betrayer was foreordained to betray Him, or with the fact that Herod and Pontius Pilate with the Gentiles and the people of Israel were gathered together to do whatsoever the hand and the counsel of God determined before to be done. Where then is the love of God in giving His Son to die, or the love of the Son in dying, or the love of the Holy Spirit in applying the purchased redemption to the souls of men? Is such an economy—an economy that has been designed to make known to the principalities and powers in heavenly places, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God—is such an economy, which the angels desire to look into, to be referred to any moving, determining cause outside the adorable Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost? Does not the soul which has experienced its redemp-

tive power in deliverance from the guilt and bondage of sin, turn, with instinctive horror, from the theory which leaves it no alternative but to ascribe such an economy to an irrational, impersonal entity, under whose administration Arminianism places, by implication, the destiny of angels and of men as well as the glory of the omniscient, omnipotent God? Instead of assuming that we have capacity to look within and examine the *arcana* of the mysteries of the Divine purposes, be it ours, as it was Paul's, to confess our impotence for such investigation, and with him to exclaim, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and his ways past finding out! * * For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen."

Belfast, Ireland, September, 1892.

CHAPTER IV.

FEDERAL HEADSHIP OF ADAM.

FOURTH PAPER.

To the Editor of the Western Recorder:

Having shown in previous articles that Dr. Northrup's objections to Calvinism are really objections to the economy of grace as set forth in the sacred Scriptures and that he not only gains nothing by rejecting the doctrine of God's sovereign decree in the salvation of men while he admits the divine foreknowledge of the final issue of that economy, but, by ruling out God from the spheres of purpose and administration must, if he will be consistent, refer the inception and ultimate issue of redemption to blind, purposeless, irrational fate, having established these positions, I would be justified in claiming that the attack has failed and that further defence is unnecessary.

There are, however, three points, which are really turning points in the controversy, to which it may not be altogether unprofitable to call attention. These are: The federal relation of Adam, the effect of his fall upon himself and his posterity, and necessity of regeneration in order

to faith and repentance. These points are in the inventory of Dr. Northrup's arraignment of Calvinism, but there is nothing in the shape of a formal statement, or systematic scriptural discussion of them. What we find is what we find under the head of the divine predestination, a set of questions and accompanying objections, the object of which is to create prejudice against the Calvinistic view regarding these vital subjects. But as it has occurred in treating of the divine decree, so has it occurred in his arraignment of the Calvinistic doctrine of Adam's federal headship, human ability, and the doctrine of regeneration. In every instance the doctrine impugned is a doctrine clearly taught in Scripture and confirmed by the history of the race, while the only alternative open to Arminianism is in conflict with the Word of God and the experience of mankind, removes no difficulty and creates difficulties ten-fold greater than those it seeks to obviate.

Take, for example, the federal headship of Adam, which, with its grave consequences, is challenged by Dr. Northrup. The death threatened was not, as a matter of fact, limited to our first parents. Whether as regards the body, or the soul, it fell upon their descendants as well as upon themselves, and fell upon their descendants, and still falls upon them, irrespective of,

and prior to, their having done either good or evil. Describing the former estate of the Ephesians the apostle affirms, that they were spiritually dead, in bondage to the course of this world and to the god of this world, and that they were, by nature, children of wrath. The context shows that the death and bondage in which the Ephesians were held were not simply the result of a course of immoral activity. On the contrary, their conduct is traced back to their being dead in trespasses and sins, and, to put the matter beyond all possibility of misapprehension, it is added, that they were by nature, that is prior to any moral action whatever, children of wrath, the just objects of the divine displeasure. Now is it not manifest that Arminianism encounters here a far greater difficulty than any arising out of the doctrine of the headship of Adam? Here, we have men pronounced children of wrath by virtue of their nature, that is, prior to their own personal transgressions. How is the divine verdict in the case to be vindicated. Arminianism has no solution. If where there is no sin committed there can be no wrath entertained or revealed, how is it that men, prior to their having committed sin, and in virtue of their nature simply, are regarded and treated as fit subjects of the wrath of God? Sin there must be, or there can be no wrath entertained, nor can there be

any penalty inflicted. But there is wrath declared, and, therefore, there must be sin: and as the wrath is coincident with the very being of the objects of it, the judicial ground of it cannot, as already stated, be their own personal transgressions. Calvinism finds the judicial ground in the first sin of our first father in whom all have died, but Arminianism, while claiming to justify the ways of God to man, must, if consistent, hold that the penalty of sin is inflicted upon the race prior to their actual enactment of sin. Catechism number two of the Wesleyan Conference finds sin in our want of original righteousness and the corruption of our whole nature commonly called original sin. This, however, leaves the problem still unsolved, for the want of original righteousness and the corruption of our whole nature is, for a moral agent, death in its direst form, and must therefore be looked upon as a penal infliction, and therefore presumes antecedent sin as the judicial ground of such infliction. As this antecedent sin antedates all actual transgression on the part of those who are the subjects of the penal infliction, it must be sought where Calvinism finds it, in the act of our common federal head.

But further: If the federal headship of Adam be rejected, what is the alternative? The only possible alternative is individual, personal

responsibility. If the race have not had probation in Adam they must have it individually, each one standing for himself. To this view there are two serious and conclusive objections.

1. The conditions of such probation are such as to render success impossible; for the probationer enters upon his career in a state which the Scriptures describe as a state of spiritual death. It is idle, and worse than idle, to speak of a moral agent, under such circumstances, as placed upon probation. At the very outset he is spiritually dead, and, as we have seen, a fit object of the wrath of God. Such he could not righteously be, except there has been an antecedent probation, and that too a probation under which the probationer failed, and, as Calvinism, with the Word of God, holds, by his failure brought death into our world and all our woe.

2. The theory of an individual personal probation is irreconcilable with the experience of the race. The advocate of this theory may well be asked, "Whether he remembers a time when he was not conscious that he was personally guilty before God?" If he must confess that he does not, the conclusion is inevitable, that at that time his probation, if ever he had one, was over and had proved a failure. In a word, if the probation accorded to the race is an individual probation, they enter upon it in their infancy,

and, in every instance, if we are to accept their own testimony, founded on their own experience, fail to win eternal life. Surely the Calvinistic doctrine of the federal headship of Adam, need not feel abashed when brought face to face with this, the sole alternative. In the one case there has been a probation given to the race in the person of a man created after the image of God, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, while in the other, every man is made to stand for himself in infancy, and that too in an infancy infected with the virus of spiritual death!

3. Besides, this theory that places each individual on probation for himself, instead of according him a probation in Adam, is simply an Arminian version of the covenant of works. It is true Arminians recognize the necessity of what they call common grace, that is, a grace common to the whole race, enabling the probationer, if he rightly use it, to repent and believe and thus fulfill the conditions of this new covenant. This, however, is still a covenant of works, as truly as the covenant made with Adam, and the work done, as Watson in his *Institutes* teaches, is pleaded by Christ as proof of the fulfillment of the conditions of the covenant by the sinner himself, and presented to the Father as the ground on which he asks for his justification!

The ultimate principle underlying this theory of an individual, personal probation, is identical with the Pelagian ultimate, viz., that responsibility implies ability. Arminians and Pelagians agree in holding that where there is no ability, there is no obligation. They differ simply in regard to the source of the ability, the Pelagians holding that it is by nature, whereas the Arminians hold that it is of grace. The principle holds true in regard to moral agents as they come from the hands of their Creator. They cannot be under obligation to render an obedience exceeding their ability. In their case ability is the measure of responsibility. This principle, however, cannot be accepted as applicable in the case of moral agents who have sinned and fallen from the estate wherein they were created, and through their fall have lost their ability to obey. Their inability is one of the consequences of their sin, and, at the same time, an index to, and an enhancement of, their guilt. To allege that their ability to obey is restored by grace, implies that apart from the gift of such restoring grace, they could not be held responsible for failure to meet the demands of the law, or punished for acts of disobedience. The only alternative open to the Lawgiver, according to this theory, is to bestow the necessary measure of grace, or to release all fallen moral agents from obligation

to obey. I say *all* fallen moral agents, for if the principle be valid, it cannot be limited in its application to sinners of mankind. Upon this principle, obligation on the part of the fallen to obey, implies obligation on the part of the Law-giver to bestow the needed grace, and the obligation to bestow it must be coextensive with the need whether of fallen angels or fallen men. It is unnecessary to say that the bestowal of the gift, under such circumstances, cannot be regarded as an act of grace, or to point out the bearing of the principle in question upon God's treatment of the angels that sinned and kept not their first estate.

Belfast, Ireland, September, 1892.

CHAPTER V.

FEDERAL HEADSHIP OF CHRIST.

FIFTH PAPER.

To the Editor of the Western Recorder:

While rejecting the doctrine of the federal headship of Adam, "as contained in the system of strict Calvinism," Arminianism admits that in virtue of their natural relation to him, as their first father, all his descendants derive from him a nature which is morally corrupt and destitute of original righteousness. According to this theory we derive this degraded nature from Adam, just as we derive it from our parents, through the channel of ordinary generation.

On this theory it may be remarked:

1. That whereas the Scriptures represent the race as dying in Adam, they never speak of them as dying in their parents. Their uniform representation is, that death entered through the one offense of the one man—that it is "in Adam that all die," and not in their immediate parents.

2. The theory confounds the ground of the penalty with the medium of its infliction. Instead of assigning a reason for the sentence of con-

demnation it tells us how the sentence has been carried into execution.

3. It leaves unsolved the problem that the penalty of sin is inflicted on those who, personally, are not chargeable with any actual transgression. It seems difficult to understand how any one who believes in the justice of God and the righteousness of the divine administration can rest satisfied in such a theory. If the sin of our first father, whereby he broke the covenant, be not recognized as the judicial ground of the divine procedure in the infliction of the dread penalty of death upon himself and his posterity, there is no solution of this momentous problem possible.

It does not help the Arminian theory to reply, as Dr. Northrup does, that the Scriptures "seem to justify the position that, prior to personal action, men are, through the atonement, free from condemnation; that the judgment which, through the one offense of Adam, came upon all men to condemnation, was removed, absolutely and forever, by the one act of righteousness of Jesus Christ." This position is without warrant either in Scripture or the history of the race. The Scriptures state the conditions on which men are freed from condemnation, and those conditions are such as to preclude the possibility of men being freed from condemnation "prior

to personal action." These conditions are, repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. None are free from condemnation save those who are justified, and, so far as adults are concerned, none save believers are justified. There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, and, therefore, all who are not in Him are under condemnation, and none are in Him who have not received Him by faith. As such reception implies action, it follows that the atonement has not, *ipso facto*, freed all men from condemnation. The obedience and death of Christ have furnished, in law and justice, the ground which justifies God in justifying those in whose behalf Christ stood, obeying and suffering, but not until the redemption purchased is applied through the agency of the Holy Ghost are their relations to the law changed. We must not frame theories of redemption which ignore the work of the Spirit in applying it at any stage in the history of the redeemed. As regards infants, it is easy to show that it is only on Calvinistic principles they can be made partakers of salvation.

It seems hard to imagine how one who rejects, as Arminians do, the doctrine of the imputation of the guilt of Adam's one offense, can speak of that judgment (that guilt?) as having been removed "by the one act of righteousness of Jesus

Christ." If the guilt incurred by that one offense was not imputed to Adam's posterity, there was no need for the removal of it from them. This is another of the incongruities of the Arminian position. Adam's sin is not imputed, and yet the death of Christ is necessary to free men from the guilt of it!

Dr. Northrup, in conformity with the Arminian theory, refers the deliverance of the race from the condemnation consequent on Adam's one offense, to "the one act of righteousness of Jesus Christ." The Arminian doctrine limits Christ's work to His atoning death, and leaves out of the account His life of obedience whereby He met the claims of the precepts of the law. It is admitted that it was necessary that He should be conformed to the law in all respects, and that He should satisfy its preceptive as well as its penal claims, but it is held that the reason was, that if He had not come up to the requirements of the law, He could not have been accepted as a lamb without spot, and would not have been duly qualified to take His place upon the altar as an atoning sacrifice. This limitation of that work whereby our Lord achieved our redemption is utterly destitute of scriptural foundation. From the outset He stood in His people's stead. For them He was made under the law that He might redeem them from its

curse. That law was written in His heart, and He was the end of it for righteousness to every one that believeth upon Him. Being found in fashion as a man, and from that moment, He humbled Himself and became obedient even unto death; yea, the death of the Cross. Even unto death. The Revisionists so render *μέχρι θανάτου* and do so rightly, bringing out clearly the force of *μέχρι*, which conveys the idea of continuous action during the whole period referred to. As this period embraces the entire history of His humiliation, extending from the time in which our Saviour was found in fashion as a man till His death on the Cross, it follows that during that entire time He was engaged in one continuous course of obedience—an obedience inseparable from suffering—which reached its climax and consummation when He cried, “It is finished,” and gave up the ghost. That this course of obedience was redemptive, rendered by Him as our Redeemer, is manifest from the fact that it is mentioned by the Apostle as embraced in the ground of the action of the Father in exalting him above all things in heaven and on earth.

Besides, we must remember that neither in His humiliation nor in His exaltation, neither in His life nor in His death, is our Saviour regarded or treated by the Father as an isolated, unrelated

individual, whose action or suffering had reference to Himself alone. It was not for Himself He become incarnate. It was because the children whom the Father had given Him were partakers of flesh and blood, that He Himself likewise took part of the same, and this was one of the conditions of His being able to bring to naught Him that had the power of death. When He hung on the Cross, His whole church was regarded as hanging there with Him, and when He, the One, died, He is represented as dying for all, and they all are represented (II. Cor. v. 14) as dying in and with Him. And as it was in His death, so was it in his resurrection. His people are represented (Ephes. ii) as being quickened and raised up together with Him, and made to sit together with Him in the heavenly places. That is, they were quickened when He was quickened, raised when He was raised, and seated in the heavenly places when He was enthroned there. As neither the apostle nor the members of the church at Ephesus were quickened into spiritual life when Christ's lifeless body was quickened in the tomb of Joseph, nor raised from the dead when He was raised, nor translated from earth to the heavenly places at the time of His enthronement in heaven, it is manifest that the doctrine underlying this passage is that of the federal headship of Christ with

whom His church in the entirety of her membership is identified both in His humiliation and exaltation.

It is therefore most unwarrantable to speak of the work of Christ, by which He wrought our redemption, as "one act of righteousness." Such reduction of His work betrays great unacquaintance with the elementary difficulties of the problem which the economy of redemption was designed to solve. While the economy is an economy of grace—a fact which Arminianism fails to appreciate, however much it speaks of grace—it is, nevertheless, and none the less, an economy whose object is to meet the claims of the law upon those whom it seeks to save. As the law consists, in its very essence, of precepts, the penalty being attached to it only in case of transgression, it is manifest that a work which singles out the penalty and deals with it alone, cannot be regarded as satisfying the law in the fullness of its requirements, as it makes no provision for the satisfaction of its precepts. The only legal issue of such a work would be the exemption of the transgressor from the infliction of the penalty. It might, perhaps, furnish a basis for his pardon; but certainly it would be utterly inadequate as a judicial ground of his justification. If, as the apostle teaches (Rom. iii. 25, 26), God must be just in justifying him

that believeth in Jesus, the ground on which He pronounces the believer just must be such as to satisfy the demands both of the precept and the penalty. The reduction of Christ's work to the one act of righteousness enacted on the Cross, involves the reduction of its legal outcome to a mere act of pardon. This is a grave reduction. It leaves the pardoned one in a most anomalous position. He is simply exempt from punishment. He is pardoned, but not justified. His case is that of a criminal whom his sovereign has forgiven, but whom he has not restored to favor or granted access to his presence. Of such an one it could not be said, that being justified by faith he has peace with God, or that he has access by faith into the grace wherein he stands and rejoices in hope of the glory of God.

It is obvious, on the slightest consideration of the elements which enter into the determination of this great question, that the reduction of Christ's work to the limits of the transaction on Calvary, must involve a thorough recast of the language of the New Testament, and the elimination from it of every term which expresses the idea of a forensic procedure on the part of the Father, when, through the agency of the Spirit, He applies to sinners the redemption purchased by Christ. Such terms can have no

place in an economy of mere condonation, and the advocates of such an economy have no right to claim that they hold and teach the doctrine of justification by faith, as proclaimed by apostles and prophets, and as given back to the church by the men who, under God, wrought her deliverance from the bondage of Rome.

Belfast, Ireland, October, 1892.

CHAPTER VI.

PLENARY ABILITY.

SIXTH PAPER.

To the Editor of the Western Recorder:

Dr. Northrup objects to the Calvinistic doctrine of the absolute inability of men in regard to spiritual things, specifying their inability to repent and believe. In opposition to this doctrine, he states, in the form of a question, his own view of the case. "Has man," he asks, "every man, ability—*plenary ability*—under the universal provisions of grace, to avoid committing the unpardonable sin and to escape final damnation?" *Full power*, for a period longer or shorter, moved by rational self-regard, a sense of duty, the natural principle of gratitude, and "aspiration for something better than he has, or than he is," in response to the quickening touch of truth and of the Holy Spirit, "to resist the evil tendencies of his nature," to strive to exercise the repentance and faith which the Bible requires, "with the certainty that his struggle will be blessed of God with the blessing of regenerating and forgiving grace? Who is it that says, If ye then, being evil, know how to give

good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?"

The italics are Dr. Northrup's, and his doctrine is, that under the universal provisions of grace, "*every man*," i. e., if it is to serve his purpose, every individual of the race, throughout the history of the race, has had "*plenary power*, in response to the quickening touch of truth and of the Holy Spirit, to resist the evil tendencies of his nature and to strive to exercise the faith and repentance which the Bible requires." It will be observed that there is, in this statement of the case, a very important concession of the chief point at issue, viz., the absolute inability of men by nature. It is conceded that it is only "under the universal provisions of grace," that men possess this *plenary ability*. Whatever ability then men possess, they possess not by *nature*, but by *grace*, and therefore where the grace has not been bestowed the ability is not possessed. The only difference between Calvinism and what is here conceded, has regard to the extent of the provisional arrangement, and the measure or degree of the spiritual strength imparted. Arminianism claims that the provision is universal, and that the ability is "*plenary*," that the power conferred by "the universal provisions of grace" is "full power to strive to exercise the repentance

and faith which the Bible requires." Calvinism, in harmony with the Scriptures and the history of mankind, denies that such grace as is here claimed, has, as a matter of fact, been provided and communicated to every individual of the race or that "*every man*" has been afforded the opportunity of exercising or of striving to exercise the faith and repentance which the Bible requires. The faith and repentance which the Bible requires is repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is only such faith and repentance that can avail to salvation. Surely it cannot be said that "*every man*" (every child of Adam) in every land and in every age of the world's history, has been placed in a position to exercise, or "to strive to exercise," these graces. It is a very awkward and inconvenient thing to be pledged to the advocacy of a theory which is contrary to the facts of the case. The facts in this case are against Arminianism, and demonstrate the truth of Calvinism. The economy of grace has been so administered as to show that God is sovereign in the administration. He did not communicate to all the Chaldeans that saving knowledge which he vouchsafed to Abraham and his seed. He chose Israel for his own while he permitted the nations to walk in darkness. It is only by shutting our eyes to the clearly revealed historical facts of the divine

administration, and ruling our theology by a species of unscriptural, unphilosophical ethics, that we can be brought to accept the position that "the provisions of grace" are universal, bestowing upon every man, in every land and in every age, "*plenary ability*" in regard to spiritual things. But further: Suppose it were true that the provisions of grace placed every human being on the globe during the New Testament dispensation in a position to repent and believe, it is difficult to see how this would help the Arminian theory. "*Every man*" in Dr. Northrup's account of the matter, cannot be limited to New Testament times. If it is to serve as a factor in his argument it must mean every man descended from Adam, whether under the Old Testament or the New. If his theology is to be harmonized with his ethics, there must be no exception to the universality of the provisions of grace. If ethics, such as Dr. Northrup assumes, viz., that responsibility implies ability, are to determine our theology, it must follow that "*every man*," from Adam to Abraham, and from Abraham to Moses, and from Moses to Christ, and from Christ to the present generation, has been in a position to win eternal life through repentance and faith such as the Bible requires. If, under the divine administration, any age, or nation, or individual, has been overlooked or left unpro-

vided with the conditions without which neither faith nor repentance is possible, the Arminian theory is disproved. That such has been one of the leading features of the dispensation of grace under both Testaments is a fact which no one who accepts the testimony of the Sacred Record, or who considers the present state of the nations that sit in darkness and the shadow of death, will call in question. This momentous fact disposes of Dr. Northrup's speculations regarding the universality of "the provisions of grace," and cannot be reconciled with the fundamental principles of the Arminian view of the way of life.

But let us look a little more closely at this sketch of the way of life. The "*plenary power*" specified awakes into actual energy only on two conditions, viz., under "the touch of truth, and of the Holy Spirit." It follows, of course, that where these conditions are not supplied, the power, however adequate, remains dormant, and the moral agent cannot exercise faith or repentance. "*The truth*," here recognized as one of the indispensable conditions of the exercise of these graces, can be no other than the Gospel of Christ. No other truth can quicken the spiritually dead into spiritual life. Is it necessary formally to prove that the vast majority of mankind in their teeming generations have never

heard of Christ or his Gospel? It may give a show of plausibility to Dr. Northrup's theory of the way of life to talk grandly of the "universal provisions of grace," but when the theory is confronted with the facts of human history, it is seen to be utterly destitute of any foundation in fact. Had the author of the sketch substituted for the term "*truth*" the phrase, "Gospel of Christ," the fallacy of his argument and the groundlessness of his theory would have become so apparent to himself that his own intelligence must have laid an immediate arrest upon his pen. Having framed a theory demanding a condition which, confessedly, has no such prevalence as the theory demands, and having, through the use of more explicit language in the statement of it, discovered this fatal defect, he might have hesitated to array it before the Christian public until he had purged it of so palpable an incongruity.

Nor is this all: the author has specified another condition, viz., "the quickening touch of the Holy Spirit." Apart from this "quickenings touch," *the truth*, even were it universally prevalent, would be impotent to impart the power necessary to the exercise of the elementary and fundamental graces of the Christian life. A touch of the Holy Spirit which does not regenerate cannot impart the needed power. "Except

a man be born from above he cannot see the kingdom of God." Even where the "*truth*" is present, then, the unregenerate cannot apprehend it.

Now, what is true of the extent and prevalence of "the truth as it is in Jesus," is equally true of the extent of the gift of the Holy Spirit, as the applier of the redemption purchased by Christ. Even the text with which Dr. Northrup closes his sketch implies this. That text proclaims the readiness of our Heavenly Father to give his Holy Spirit to them that ask Him. Yes, "to them that ask Him;" but how can those who have never heard of the Father or of His Holy Spirit, ask Him for this unspeakable gift? Here, then, is another fatal defect, and when combined with its conjunct condition, "*the truth*," it completes the arraignment and impeachment of the theory, and furnishes a still further warrant to challenge and reject it. These two conditions are correlative, and, for redemptive purposes, inseparable and indispensable. In so far as adults are concerned, "*the truth*" is indispensable as the sword of the Spirit, and apart from the Spirit the Word is but the savour of death unto death. As these conjunct conditions, recognized by Dr. Northrup as necessary, are not now, and never have been, universally prevalent, his theory is made void, and the system of which it constitutes

an essential element, is not only imperiled, but subverted.

Dr. Northrup does not hold that the grace conferring this "*plenary power*" amounts to regenerating or forgiving grace. Such grace is bestowed afterwards, upon those who struggle against the evil tendencies of their nature, and who "strive to exercise the repentance and faith which the Bible requires." It will be seen at once that this qualifying clause in the statement of the theory does not necessitate any modification of the argument now advanced in refutation of it. The condition attached to this supplementary blessing, and on which the bestowal of it is hinged, is a condition which all men have not been placed in a position to fulfill. How can a man "strive to exercise the repentance and faith which the Bible requires" who has never heard of the Bible or of the Saviour it reveals? It is manifest then, that Dr. Northrup makes the bestowal of regenerating, forgiving grace depend upon a condition which the sinner, being still unregenerate, must fulfill, while it is equally manifest that the overwhelming majority of the human race have not been placed, either subjectively or objectively, in a position to fulfill it. If "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Rom. x. 17), this theory of the way of life is negatived, for "how shall men

believe on Him of whom they have not heard?
and how shall they hear without a preacher?
and how shall they preach except they be sent?"

(The doctrine of the Apostle is, that the knowledge of the Lord is indispensable to faith, and faith to salvation. If Dr. Northrup believes this, how can he allege that the provisions of grace are universal, seeing that the requisite knowledge has not been communicated to all men, in all ages of the world's history? This one fact is fatal to Arminianism, which requires for its support that "*every man*"—every child of Adam—from the beginning of the world to the end of it should be placed in a position to obtain eternal life. The world's history, thus far, and the testimony of the Word of God, prove that the requisite conditions of the theory have no existence in fact, while they proclaim and illustrate that Divine Sovereignty in Predestination which Dr. Northrup has so eagerly, yet vainly, assailed.

Belfast, Ireland, October, 1892.

CHAPTER VII.

UNSCIENTIFIC METHOD.

SEVENTH PAPER.

To the Editor of the Western Recorder :

In closing my review of Dr. Northrup's strictures, there is one feature of his articles to which I ask attention as a grave defect from a scientific point of view. It is this: Instead of examining the evidences on which Calvinists rely in support of their system, he simply collects together a number of objections, and arraying these before his readers asks them for their verdict. This method of procedure is as unscientific as it is unfair. It is unscientific in the study of any branch of human thought to begin with the objections. It is very easy to conjure up objections to some of the most clearly revealed and attested facts and doctrines of the Word of God. For example, the Scriptures inform us that the crucifixion of our Lord was in accordance with the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, and, at the same time, they tell us that the men who crucified Him did it with wicked hands (Acts ii. 23). Stephen (Acts vii. 52) pronounces Christ's death a mur-

der, and charges the Sanhedrin with the double crime of being His betrayers and murderers. There is no difficulty in framing an objection to these accounts of the death of our Redeemer. It is easy to call upon the advocates of the divine sovereignty in this momentous transaction, to reconcile the avowed doctrine of the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God with the freedom and responsibility of the moral agents by whom it was enacted, and who were foreordained to perpetrate the murderous deed. Does it follow from the confessed inability of the advocate of the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, to attempt the solution of this mysterious problem, that the writer of the narrative, in which both the divine counsel and the culpability of the human agents are affirmed, has been guilty of a historical mistake, and has thereby inculcated a serious doctrinal error? The Calvinist is not the only one who has to face the problem. The Arminian who accepts the testimony of the sacred narrative as divinely inspired, is as much bound to vindicate the action of God in this matter as the Calvinist. Both agree that the narrative is unimpeachable, and both must agree that the solution of the problem it raises surpasses the powers of the intellect of man. The obvious conclusion is, that in studying the mysteries of redemption we

have simply to accept the testimony of the *Record*, and having ascertained what it is to which the *Record* bears witness, we are not to be much moved by ingenious, or even plausible, objections which may be urged against it, especially when it is discovered, as in the present case, that the same, and still more formidable objections may be urged against the opposing theory. Had Dr. Northrup observed this scientific, common sense, reverent principle in the prosecution of his theological inquiries, he would not, on the ground of such objections as he has preferred against Calvinism, have concluded that its claims were discredited, or have imagined that he had, by urging such objections, not only overthrown Calvinism, but established the claims of its Arminian rival. Objections to one system do not, necessarily, establish the claims of its opposite.

Neither Calvinism, nor any other theological system, is to be judged of in this way. Each system is to be tested by the Word of God, for each theological system claims to be a systematic exhibition of the doctrines inculcated in the Word. It may form a fitting conclusion to this discussion to furnish the readers with an outline of the Scripture testimony on which Calvinists base their doctrinal system. While they hold that the theologian must, like the man of science,

construct his system out of the facts presented in the record with which he deals, they hold also that the theologian is not left, as the scientist is in dealing with the phenomena of nature, to frame hypotheses and test his hypotheses by multiplied and oft-repeated experiments ere he can feel assured that he has discovered the law by which the phenomena are linked together as parts of one harmonious whole. Such is not the position of the theologian in relation to the phenomena of Revelation. Instead of such scientific toil his task is the comparatively easy one of filling up an outline given him on the authority of the Author of the Revelation Himself. As specimens of this outline the following are submitted: "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first born among many brethren. Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"

etc., etc. (Rom. vii. 28-32). "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love; having predestinated us unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ unto Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of trespasses, according to the riches of His grace" (Eph. i. 3-7). "All that the Father giveth me shall come unto me; and him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which He hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. * * No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him; and I will raise him up at the last day" (John vi. 37-44).

Now these are not isolated texts which, individually, support a particular point of doctrine and have no reference to any other doctrine in the analogy of the faith. As stated at the out-

set, they are the outlines of the plan of redemption, and cannot, fairly, be viewed in any other light. The points embraced in these outlines are as follows:

1. That all which God does in the salvation of men, He does in pursuance of a purpose which has its origin in the good pleasure of His will—a purpose which He purposed in Himself.

2. That the ultimate design of God, in the ordination and prosecution of this purpose, was, that the whole procedure should be to the praise of the glory of His grace.

3. That, for the infallible conduct and execution of this purpose, He gave commission to His own Son, committing to Him the subjects of the purposed redemption.

4. That this commission was a definite commission, having *redemptive* reference to those given Him of the Father, and to no others.

5. That the Son, under this commission, engaged to lose nothing of all that which the Father had given Him, and engaged to raise it up at the last day.

6. That those embraced in this purpose of grace are predestinated to be conformed to the image of the Son Himself, and not merely to a knowledge of the way of life, or to the privileges of the means of grace.

7. That the means whereby the goal of conformity to this image is to be reached, are calling, justification, and glorification.

8. That as men cannot, of themselves, come to this commissioned Saviour, the Father Himself draws them, and draws all whom He has commissioned Him to save.

9. That Christ receives all whom the Father draws to Him, and having received them (*οὐ μὴ ἐκβάλω ἔξω*) will in no wise cast them out.

That such is the outline of the economy of Redemption presented in these passages, admits of no question. There is no room for discussion here. The points above enumerated are the outstanding facts and features of these texts. The analysis now given is a fair analysis, and no counter analysis is possible. The only point to be settled therefore is, with which of the two systems, the Calvinistic or the Arminian, does it agree? This is the sole question, and it is very easily settled. There is not a single one of these points that Arminianism can accept. It cannot admit that the purpose to redeem arose, as a matter of grace, out of the good pleasure of God, for it hold, if it holds with Wesley, that God might not in justice have passed by man when he fell. It cannot therefore admit that the ultimate design of the divine procedure was, or is, that it might be to the praise of the glory

of God's grace. It cannot admit that the commission given to the Son embraced a definite people given Him of the Father, and no others, or that the commission embraced the resurrection of the bodies of every one of them. It cannot admit that those given to Christ of the Father have been predestinated to be conformed to His image. It cannot admit that all those given Him are to be called, justified, and glorified. It cannot admit that all whom the Father has given to the Son are, by the Father, drawn to the Son, or that, in every instance, those thus drawn are received and never afterwards cast out.

Judged by the above divinely inspired outline, therefore, Arminianism stands condemned, whereas the analysis is neither more nor less than an outline of the Calvinistic system. Nor is the outline deduced from these passages dependent upon them alone. Similar systematic sketches of the plan of salvation abound in both Testaments, while the plan sketched has been illustrated throughout the history of the divine administration of the kingdom of grace. In neither Testament can a counter Arminian sketch be discovered. It is not upon such closely concatenated passages Arminianism relies. Its sole stock in controversy consists of isolated texts severed from their contexts, and

a series of objections, based upon a false ethical philosophy, which, if valid, would dethrone Jehovah and make void the Covenant of Redemption and the work of its adorable Surety, together with the office-work of the Holy Spirit.

On behalf of Calvinism it can be claimed that it is the doctrinal system deduced from the Scriptures by the theologians both of the Lutheran and the Reformed churches, while it is a historical fact that Arminianism did not appear upon the theatre of theological conflict until the victory was won, when, instead of giving succor to the defenders of the faith and aiding them in strengthening its defenses, it set itself to subvert the fundamental principles of that system of saving truth which the Reformers had so triumphantly maintained against the theologians and hierarchy of Rome. Whatever else Dr. Northrup may have failed to establish in his strictures, he has made it clear that the old antagonism abides, and that between "the system of strict Calvinism" and its Arminian rival, there can be no righteous alliance or compromise.

The union of the different denominations is one of the most important *desiderata* of our age, and, if effected, would contribute vastly to the strength and efficiency of our various Gospel agencies; but the union that is to subserve these

ends must not be brought about through the surrender of such doctrinal principles as Dr. Northrup has called in question. The advocates of union are accustomed to minimize the differences which separate the churches of Protestant Christendom, and urge that the points of difference should be overlooked or held in abeyance, and that the points of agreement alone should have place in our brotherly intercourse. This view of the situation seems plausible, but it is nevertheless unscriptural and indefensible. The Scriptures are decisive on this very question. The rule they prescribe is, that peace is not to be purchased at the sacrifice of purity, and a union which is not based on purity of doctrine cannot be productive of ecclesiastical peace. Instead, therefore, of overlooking our differences, we should, if we are ever to arrive at a union which shall confer on the churches the blessing of peace, discuss, in a brotherly spirit, our points of difference, testing them by the infallible standard of the Divine Word, and rejecting all doctrinal principles which cannot abide this test. It is on this principle the articles now brought to a close have been written, and it is hoped that they may, in some measure, contribute to the attainment of this end.

Belfast, Ireland, November, 1892.

CHAPTER VIII.

DR. NORTHRUP'S REJOINDER.

In a series of five articles published in *The Standard*, in the early part of the current year, and republished in the *Magazine of Christian Literature*, we discussed the doctrine of the Sovereignty of God in Predestination as contained in the system of strict Calvinism. In the discussion of this doctrine we endeavored to show that:

1. It virtually involves the denial of the benevolence of God.

2. It requires us to ascribe to God pure arbitrariness and caprice in determining the eternal destiny of the members of our race.

3. It implies that the perdition of a part of mankind—the nonelect—is not only certain, but *inevitable*, do what they can to obtain eternal life, even in the way appointed in the gospel.

4. It logically compels us to believe that God does not have love and compassion for all men in the sense of desiring to save each and every one of them, and hence, that he is not dealing with them in good faith.

5. It logically necessitates an agnostic position touching the fate of any infant dying in infancy.

We endeavored to show, also, that these difficulties, which are inherent in the strict Calvinistic system, cannot be removed, nor materially lessened, by that type of Calvinism which, though recognizing the universality of the atonement, affirms plenary natural ability and utter moral inability, but denies the removal, through the atoning work of Christ, of the sentence of condemnation brought by Adam upon his posterity.

It was our design in a second series of articles to examine the alleged Biblical support of the Calvinistic doctrine of God's sovereignty in predestination, and to state our own views upon the main points involved in the controversy. To the positions which we took in our criticism of strict Calvinism, Professor Robert Watts, D.D., LL.D., of Belfast, Ireland, has replied in a series of articles in the *Western Recorder*, which have been republished in the *Magazine of Christian Literature*. Our design in this paper is to review the reviewer, to examine the relevancy, validity and weight of the considerations which he urges in refutation of the views which we advanced. It is worthy of remark, at the outset, that Dr. Watts has shown great penetration in discovering the object which we had in view in our discussion, viz: "To create *prejudice* against the Calvinistic doctrines," that is, to lead our readers

to form opinions adverse to Calvinism, without proper grounds, or suitable knowledge. Of course he *knows* this charge to be true, otherwise he would not make it. It would be interesting to learn just how he made this discovery, for we are conscious of no such object; on the contrary, it was our sincere belief that we desired to lead our readers to form certain opinions, not *without*, but *in view of*, adequate reasons. It would seem, however, that we are totally mistaken on this point.

PALPABLE MISREPRESENTATIONS—AS TO FAITH
AND REPENTANCE.

I. In the first place we intend to convict Dr. Watts of a half-dozen palpable and inexcusable misrepresentations; we say palpable and inexcusable, because the doctrinal views imputed to us are explicitly disavowed, and in some cases refuted, in the articles which he set himself to review.

1. Dr. Watts charges us with rejecting the Calvinistic and accepting the Arminian view as to the relation of regeneration to faith and repentance. He says: "There are three really turning points in the controversy; the federal relation of Adam, the effect of his fall on himself and his posterity, and *the necessity of regeneration in order to faith and repentance.*" These points are

in the inventory of Dr. Northrup's arraignment of Calvinism." And yet in our second article occurs the following statement:

"Though man has a measure of freedom, a remainder of liberty, the exercise of which, under divine grace, may have a decisively favorable bearing upon his eternal destiny, it is not an ability by virtue of which he can will himself from darkness into light, from death into life, can create himself anew in Jesus Christ. He is not, of course, passive, listless, inert, but is active, often intensely so, before and at the time of renewal; but in the origination of the new life he has no agency." * * "In the midst of these varied activities of reason, conscience, sensibility and will; beneath them all, below consciousness itself, at the centre of the soul, there is a divine touch, opening the blind eyes, emancipating the enslaved will and calling into exercise faith, and love, and hope, and every other spiritual principle of our being. *Thus repentance and faith are, in the logical order, subsequent to regeneration, which is the exclusive work of God, and which necessarily presuppose an eternal purpose of salvation.*" With this passage before him Professor Watts thinks it right to assert that "the necessity of regeneration in order to repentance and faith is in the inventory of Dr. Northrup's arraignment of Calvinism!"

AS TO DIVINE DECREES.

2. Again Dr. Watts charges us with denying the doctrine of the divine decrees. He says: "By rejecting the decree while admitting the foreknowledge of God, he has shut himself up to the dread alternative of blank fatalism which rules God out of the sphere of moral agency;" "the objector has ruled out God, let him bring forth his substitute," etc. And he proceeds to paint a most frightful picture of the condition of the universe as logically involved in the denial of the divine decree: "The omniscient Jehovah dethroned and in His place blind, relentless fate;" "the whole arrangements for the calling, justification and glorification of the elect, involving the death of Christ, etc., etc., ascribed to the soulless, passionless, unintelligent idol—Fate!"

Would any reader of these representations ever imagine that the articles which Dr. Watts is criticising contain many statements like the following: "God bestowed mercy upon Paul because He eternally purposed to do so;" "the execution of His eternal decrees of election and reprobation is an essential part of God's perfect self-revelation;" "the divine decrees, so-called, are simply one decree, viz: that one indivisible, eternal act by which God determined to give reality to the existing plan of the universe; one

purpose involving an infinite number of executive volitions in time and space, which executive volitions—not purposes—stand to each other in both logical and chronological relations.” * * “But the acts of God in this affair are a part of the infinity of executive volitions by which He carries out *His one eternal purpose so to constitute and govern the universe that all things would take place precisely as they do take place.*” What is the proper characterization of the criticism which imputes to a writer the denial of a doctrine which he not only does not deny, but distinctly and repeatedly affirms?

We are not concerned to defend the Arminian theory which Dr. Watts assails, but it will be instructive to place beside his fancy sketch—“The omniscient Jehovah dethroned and in His place blind, relentless Fate,” etc.—the strong and judicious words of the late Principal Cunningham, one of the very ablest expounders and defenders of the system of strict Calvinism—*The Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation*, p. 511—: “It is, we think, *unwarranted and presumptuous* to assert that *even the self-determining power of the will* would prevent Him in whom we live, move and have our being, who is everywhere and at all times present in the exercise of all His perfections, who searcheth the heart and trieth the reins of the children of men, from

superintending and directing all its movements according to the counsel of his own will."

AS TO GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY.

3. We pass to notice a third instance in which Professor Watts imputes to us the denial of a doctrine which we distinctly and strongly affirmed, viz: the doctrine of the Divine Sovereignty. In all his articles we find language like the following: "Denying the sovereignty of God within the sphere of redemption;" "rejecting the doctrine of God's sovereign pleasure;" "ruling out God from the sphere of purpose and administration;" "but if this be the universal experience of Christian men what becomes of the theory which challenges the divine sovereignty in the dispensation of grace towards sinners of mankind?" "Is there any room for discussions such as Dr. Northrup has raised? Can the divine sovereignty in the choice of these saints at Ephesus be called in question without calling in question the inspiration of the Apostle Paul?"

We will now indicate, in the following statements contained in our discussion, the nature of the ground for the above charge: "The sovereignty of God is his power and right to constitute and govern the universe according to his absolute ethical perfection; it implies supremacy, independence and infinite moral excellency;"

“God is a sovereign and the highest of all because he possesses the power and the right to govern and dispose of all creatures according to the dictates of His infinite intelligence, making Himself His own highest good, and highest end;” “the sovereignty of God is the immutable foundation of the stability and order of the universe, and of the security and felicity of all holy beings;” “the divine sovereignty should be the source of the greatest encouragement and hope as well as of fear to the sinner.”

Simple justice required the reviewer to say that what we rejected is the doctrine of God's sovereignty as contained in the system of strict Calvinism, while we set forth a different idea of the divine sovereignty and claimed for it the amplest Biblical support. The term sovereignty as applied to God is not found in the Scriptures, and every student of theology knows that it is one of the vaguest terms in theological literature. In our discussion we gave six definitions of the divine sovereignty and could easily have increased the number from works on divinity. The Calvinistic doctrine of God's sovereignty in predestination, which we examined and rejected, may be stated thus: The sovereignty of God is a prerogative in the exercise of which He is absolutely free to will the exact opposite of that which He does will in relation to the eternal

destiny of every member of our race. This is the doctrine which Dr. Watts accepts, that is, he holds that in decreeing to elect a part of mankind and to reprobate a part, God acted in a manner infinitely wise and glorious, and that had He reversed these decrees as regards the individuals included in them, electing those reprobated and reprobating those elected, or had He determined to include in either of these decrees any number of individuals less than the whole human race, or had He decreed the salvation of all or the damnation of all, He would have acted in a manner equally wise and glorious,—all these supposable modes of procedure being, to His omniscient view, absolutely equal or identical in point of excellency as expressions of His being and attributes. And this is confidently affirmed to be the biblical doctrine of the sovereignty of God—a prerogative in the exercise of which He is able to bring *all*, instead of a *part*, of our race to the purity and felicity of the heavenly world, “without prejudice to the glory of any of His attributes!” Suppose an absolute monarch who firmly believes—infallibly knows—that all the demands of his own being and the highest interests of his empire would be as fully met by the pardon of a criminal as by consigning him to solitary confinement for life, should deliberately pursue the latter course, we should like to know how

Dr. Watts would regard the character and sovereignty of such a monarch. Would he consider him to be a benevolent ruler, and as exercising his sovereignty in a wise and honorable manner?

AS TO THE DIVINE NATURE.

4. In the fourth place Professor Watts asserts that we hold the "Arminian" theory of the divine nature "which is not in harmony with the teaching of the word of God in regard to the history of God's dealings with Israel and with the whole human race." This assertion, though involved in the charge considered above, demands special examination. And what is the unscriptural "Arminian" theory of the divine nature which we hold? In the articles which Dr. Watts has taken in hand we said: "According to the teaching of Scripture there is in God a principle of absolute, ethical limitation or self-restraint. He cannot deny Himself, He cannot lie, He cannot be tempted of evil, He cannot give His glory to another. The principle of God's necessary self-limitation or self-restraint is not His holiness or His love, but His *absolute ethical perfection*, of which holiness and love are the essence, and which is the rule and law of His will in all His acts in creation, providence and redemption. Now it is on the ground of this fundamental truth of inspiration that we affirm our conviction

that God will do the utmost that He can do to save every member of our race; the utmost that He can do having due regard to the universal and everlasting interests of His kingdom and the glory of His name; that He will consign no man to hell whom He could bring to heaven, and remain God,—no man whom He could present faultless before the presence of His glory, acting in accordance with the supreme law of His absolute ethical perfection.” This, then, is our unscriptural and “Arminian” idea of God: God is a being of absolute ethical perfection, of which holiness and love are the essence; holiness, “The highest purity of God, excluding all fault in Him, and demanding purity from the creature;” and love, an eternal, infinite passion which moved Him to go forth in acts of self-sacrifice for the salvation of the lost, immeasurably transcending all thought, human or angelic. This “Arminian” idea of God Dr. Watts rejects with indignation, and holds that God is a being whose fundamental procedure in relation to the universe is set forth in the following language of the Westminster Confession: “By the decree of God, for His own glory, some men and angels are predestined unto eternal life and others foreordained unto everlasting death. These angels and men, thus predestined and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed, and

their number is so certain and definite that it can neither be increased nor diminished." And this is the correct representation of the ways of Him "who is good to all," "whose tender mercies are over all his works," who solemnly declares that "He has no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, but that he would turn and live;" of Him who is one in nature and spirit with Jesus Christ, the feelings of whose heart, even towards those whose wickedness was rapidly rising to its culmination, were expressed in tears and words of infinite tenderness and pathos,— "O, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" As to this idea of God which Dr. Watts accepts and defends we cannot express our conviction better than in the following language of the *Examiner*: "To represent God as foreordaining from all eternity the everlasting death of a large part of the human race and so fixing their destiny that no efforts on their part could possibly alter or increase the number of the saved by a single unit is nothing short of blasphemy. It is not to describe God, a being of holiness and love, *but an omnipotent devil*. It is to read the gospel declaration, 'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him

shall not perish, but have everlasting life,' in exactly the opposite sense,—God so hated the world that He foreordained a large part of it to everlasting misery." Slanders like this against the holiness and love of God go far to justify the infidel in saying "the God of the Orthodox is my devil;" they have done, in our judgment, more injury to the cause of Christian truth and to the souls of men, than the assaults of all the infidels from Celsus to Ingersoll.

AS TO THE ATONEMENT.

5. We pass to call attention to another instance in which Professor Watts imputes to us, without the slightest warrant, a view the exact opposite of which we have held and taught for a quarter of a century. In the course of our discussion we used the following language: "The total absence of any reference to the Adamic guilt as among the grounds of the sentence of condemnation to be pronounced at the day of judgment, the language of Christ respecting little children — Luke xviii. 15, 16; Matt. xviii. 10, 14; and especially Rom. ix. 25 and x. 18, 19, seem to justify the position that prior to personal action men are, through the atonement, free from condemnation; that the judgment which through the one offense of Adam came upon all men to condemnation, was

removed, absolutely and forever, *by the one act of righteousness of Jesus Christ.*" On the ground of the last clause of the above paragraph we are charged with holding the "Arminian" doctrine, "which limits Christ's work to His atoning death and leaves out of the account His life of obedience, whereby He met the claims of the precepts of the law." On this wholly gratuitous misrepresentation we remark:

(1) That in using the language, "By one act of righteousness of Jesus Christ," we followed the Revised Version, which renders the second clause of Rom. v. 18, thus: "Even so through one act of righteousness the free gift came upon all men to justification of life." Though we did not indicate our view of the meaning of the phrase, "one act of righteousness," we regarded it as denoting the whole work of Christ viewed as one single act of obedience.

(2) That, as remarked above, the view imputed to us we discarded a quarter of a century ago, and have ever since taught that Christ's entire life, from the time when He took the form of a servant to his expiring cry upon the cross—His life of perfect obedience and His life of constant suffering—constituted that perfect work on the ground of which God "can Himself be just and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus."

(3) That in holding that the "one act of righteousness" refers exclusively to Christ's atoning death, Dr. Watts is not supported by New Testament commentators. Meyer and Godet refer "the one act" to God: "The one collective sentence of justification which, in consequence of the death of Christ, has been pronounced in favor of all sinners." Dr. Riddle says: "Here Christ's *obedience* viewed as one act, as the ground of justification, seems to be meant. According to Dr. Hovey, "The clause should be explained by the exactly paralleled *obedience* of the one in the following verse. It seems to denote the ground of the believer's justification so far as this depends on the active obedience of Christ." But it is needless to multiply these statements; they are sufficient to show how utterly gratuitous is the charge that we hold the "Arminian" theory "which limits the work of Christ to His atoning death, and leaves out of the account His life of holy obedience whereby He met the claims of the precepts of the law."

We cannot leave this point without calling attention to one astonishing statement of Dr. Watts. The statement is this: "It is, therefore, most unwarrantable to speak of the work of Christ by which He wrought our redemption as 'one act of righteousness.' Such reduction of

His work betrays great unacquaintance with the elementary difficulties of the problem which the economy of redemption was designed to solve." Here the Apostle Paul, held to be the chief expounder of the doctrines of the Calvinistic system, is represented by an able and strenuous defender of that system, As making "a most unwarrantable statement touching the work by which Christ wrought our redemption," and as "betraying great unacquaintance with the elementary difficulties of the problem which the economy of redemption was designed to solve!" Our memory does not recall a more remarkable phenomenon in the history of theological literature. What a pity that the apostle had not had some theologian of the nineteenth century to instruct him more fully as to the "elementary difficulties which the economy of redemption was designed to solve," so that he would not have made the "unwarrantable" statement: "Even so through one act of righteousness the free gift came upon all men to justification of life."

AS TO SALVATION BY GRACE.

6. We shall consider but one more misrepresentation, which is, however, by far the most serious of all, viz: the charge that we deny the fundamental doctrine that salvation is of grace

and not a debt. This charge is made implicitly and explicitly, as in the following language: "Mr. Wesley denies that God might have justly passed by man when he fell. As an Arminian he speaks consistently with his theory, but having taken this ground he has no right to speak of the Divine interposition as an act of grace. If God might not *in justice*, have passed by man when he fell, He would have done him an injustice to have passed him by, and when, instead of passing him by, He visited him, He was simply performing toward him an act of *justice*. Arminians are ever claiming that they are pre-eminently the advocates of free grace; but their principles, now advanced by President Northrup prove, to a demonstration, that the claim is absolutely destitute of warrant, either in the nature of the economy, or in the history of its administration." And he asks, "Will Dr. Northrup be good enough to give his readers an analysis of the experience through which a sinner passes when under conviction of sin?" We answer: Yes, Dr. Northrup is good enough to comply with this reasonable request, and in order to give the desired information in the briefest possible space, he would refer to two pieces of literature in which his own experiences and views in relation to the point in question, are clearly and powerfully set forth,

viz: the Fifty-first Psalm, and Bunyan's "Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners."

Now, we challenge Professor Watts to produce a single statement in our whole discussion which affords the least measure of justification for the charges made, explicitly and by implication, that we hold "that salvation is not of grace but a debt, that God could not have *justly* passed man by when he fell, that he is bound *in justice* to bestow salvation upon the sinner who does what he can to obtain it, that the sinner can do something which can be pleaded as a just ground of acceptance with God." The Arminian theory here imputed to us we disavowed and repudiated in the articles under review.

The reviewer had, possibly, the following paragraph in mind when making the above allegations. Having made a quotation from Dr. Candlish, we remarked: "What warrant is there in reason or revelation for the view here presented, that it was morally possible for God to purpose to create our first parents, to permit the fall and the development of the successive generations of their posterity, and to make no provision for their salvation? All we *know*, all that there is any warrant for affirming is, that the plan of the universe, which God adopted because most worthy of himself, included, as eternal and essential elements, the creation of man,

the permission, or nonprevention of the fall, and redemption through Jesus Christ. That the plan would have been equally perfect, or that it would have been worthy of comparison with the existing plan—the element of redemption being left out—is what no man knows or can know, and what therefore no man has a right to affirm. But the position here taken does not imply that, as regards the *rights* or *claims* of men, God was under obligation to provide salvation; but only that the present plan, embracing the certainty of the fall and the purpose of redemption, is most congruous with his nature, expressing most perfectly his infinite perfections.” But there is not in this statement the least implication as to what God could have done, or could not have done, *in justice*, or what He might have proposed to do in case *justice were the sole ethical quality of His being*. We know that God is a Being of infinite love as well as of absolute justice, and that the present economy in which both these perfections are wondrously illustrated, is more worthy of Him than would have been an economy in which *justice* should hold absolute sway; we know this because he adopted the former plan instead of the latter, and because the Scriptures abundantly teach that the work of redemption is the crowning glory of His ways.

How could one imagine that the fact that God could not satisfy the promptings of his infinitely benevolent heart, except in the way of the incarnation and the cross, would lead any sinner to think, or seek to justify himself in thinking, that he did not *deserve* the retributions of Divine justice? Suppose that God had, in a supernatural way, made it known to Bunyan in the days of his agony under conviction of sin, that He could glorify Himself in a higher degree, and subserve the interests of His universal kingdom more perfectly by taking him to heaven than by consigning him to hell; would such a revelation to Bunyan have led him to think that God was bound, *in justice*, to save him, and that he had a *right* to demand admission to heaven? Would it not rather have greatly intensified his sense of guilt and worthiness of damnation—his sins appearing to be vastly aggravated as committed against a Being who loved him with an infinite and everlasting personal love?

But it seems that Dr. Watts firmly believes—in fact, *knows*—that God would have acted in a manner infinitely wise and glorious, had he decreed the trial and fall of our first parents, the development of the successive generations of their posterity, the death in infancy of one-half of their descendants, and the perdition not only of all adults, but of all who die before reaching

the period of responsible action,—the ground of this stupendous conclusion being the “legal fiction” known as the “federal theory,” which has no advocate of note among living divines, American or European!

AS TO THE CHARGE OF ARMINIANISM.

But we must conclude this part of our discussion, though we might considerably increase the list of instances in which we are charged with holding views which we repudiate. Dr. Watts designates us, directly or indirectly, as an “Arminian,” between forty and fifty times, and has shown no hesitation in imputing to us any tenet of the Arminian system. It is impossible to suppose that he read our articles with care, for such a supposition would be an impeachment of his intelligence or his honesty, which we should not care to make in either case.

The question then naturally arises, how could he impute to us this series of Arminian notions? The only plausible solution of this problem which occurs to us is found in ascribing to Dr. Watts a course of reasoning like the following: Calvinism is an adamantine, logical unit; hence the rejection of a part necessitates the rejection of the whole system. Calvinism and Arminianism are contradictories; consequently, the rejection

tion of Calvinism necessitates the adoption of Arminianism. Therefore, since Dr. Northrup in rejecting a part must reject the whole Calvinistic system, he is logically compelled to accept the contradictory system—Arminianism. Hence it is right to charge him with holding all the tenets of that system. We are confirmed in the correctness of this solution by the fact that Dr. Watts follows a similar method in criticising Dr. Briggs' inaugural. Seizing upon the following sentence of the address: "The original man was innocent and sinless, but not possessed of *that* righteousness and moral excellence that comes only by discipline and heavenly training," and perverting the meaning of the sentence by omitting the critical word *that*, and regarding Dr. Briggs as saying: "The original man was innocent and sinless, but not possessed of righteousness and moral excellence," he finds in the sentence, thus mutilated, "the organific principle" of the address, which "principle" he works with such vigor and skill as to convict Dr. Briggs of radical error in relation to the incarnation, the depravity of man, the nature of regeneration, etc., etc.

GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY IN THE NINTH OF ROMANS.

II. We propose now to examine in the briefest possible manner, the alleged teaching of the

ninth chapter of Romans in support of the doctrine of God's sovereignty as contained in the system of strict Calvinism. In order that the fundamental point in controversy may be clearly seen we remark:

1. That men are saved—attain to the purity and felicity of the heavenly world—because they exercise repentance towards God and faith in Jesus Christ.

2. That they exercise faith and repentance because the Holy Spirit renews them—originates in them a holy disposition which is the permanent basis of all holy exercises.

3. That God regenerates them by his Spirit because He purposed to do so—their renewal being the execution of an eternal and immutable purpose of grace.

4. That He purposed to renew them because it “was His good pleasure,” “the counsel of His will,” “seemed good in His sight.” But what do these phrases mean? Do they teach that “In making the selection of some men and in resolving to save them, God was not influenced by anything existing in them or foreseen in them by which they were distinguished from other men; that the total reasons for action remaining the same, He was entirely free to elect those reprobated and to reprobate those elected—able

to decree the salvation of all or the damnation of all, "without prejudice to the glory of any of His attributes?" This is the doctrine of God's sovereignty which we call in question. The ninth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans is the portion of Scripture which is most frequently and confidently appealed to in support of this doctrine. If the Calvinistic doctrine of God's Sovereignty in Predestination is not in this chapter, it is not in the New Testament.

Before considering the particular declarations of this passage we wish to make two general observations:

1. In the first eleven chapters of this great doctrinal epistle the apostle unfolds God's method of grace, which may be expressed in two thoughts: (1) Salvation by righteousness. (2) Righteousness by faith in Jesus Christ. At the conclusion of the whole discussion he declares the all-comprehending purpose of God in the following language: "For God hath shut up *all* unto disobedience that He might have mercy upon *all*." No interpretation of any passage in the preceding discussion can be regarded as correct which contradicts the universal scope of the purpose of grace as disclosed in the thirty-second verse of the eleventh chapter.

2. Again, we need to keep in mind the fatal delusion of the Jews which the apostle is seek-

ing to dissipate—their reliance upon works as *meritorious*, as giving them a claim to the divine favor. “Blinded by their prejudices and intoxicated with spiritual pride, they believed themselves to be *entitled to* the favor of God on the ground of their covenant relations with Him, the practice of circumcision, the possession of a spiritual revelation, and a divinely appointed priesthood.” Julius Mueller — “In Romans, ninth chapter, the leading idea is that no man can have a claim to salvation on the score of justice.” Meyer—“In opposition to the Jewish conceit of descent and works Paul desired to establish the free and sovereign power of the divine will and action, and that the more decisively and exclusively the less he would leave any ground for the arrogant illusion of the Jews that God *must* be gracious to them.”

(10–12) We pass, now, to consider some of the declarations of this chapter. It is the opinion of the highest authorities in New Testament interpretation that nothing is said, in these verses, of the final destiny of either brother; “that what is spoken of here is the position of the one and not of the other as the depositary of the promise to Abraham.” It cannot be supposed, however, that, in choosing Jacob instead of Esau, God did not act in view of *some difference* between them—not a difference in the mat-

ter of merit, for of merit there could be no question—still some difference which rendered the former better fitted than the latter to be the depositary of the Messianic promise.

(15) The declaration of God to Moses: “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion,” “is to be understood in a causal sense as the reason why Moses’ request was granted, namely, that it was an act of unconditional grace and compassion on the part of God to which no man, not even Moses, could lay any just claim.” (Kell and Delitzsch.) “No man may deal with God as a debtor.” (Bengel.)

(16) The declaration: “It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that hath mercy,” teaches, not that willing and running avail nothing, for this would be to contradict the gracious promise of our Lord (Matt. vii. 7, 8; John v. 40; Rev. xxii. 17), but “that man by his efforts can never *meritoriously* acquire the divine favor.” (Meyer.)

(18) In this verse the apostle sums up the whole matter of God’s sovereignty in mercy and judgment: “So then He hath mercy on whom He will and whom He will He hardeneth.” In these words we have the strongest possible assertion of the fact that God acts as a sovereign in determining the final destinies of men, showing

mercy to some, and manifesting displeasure towards others, as He may determine in view of all the reasons before His omniscient mind. By the will of God as used here and generally in Scripture is meant, not simply the power of voluntary action, but the nature of God, as benevolent, merciful, holy, in actual exercise in the light of His infinite intelligence. The action of His sovereign will in election and reprobation, as in every other sphere, is an expression of His absolute ethical perfection. The passage, then, cannot teach the sovereignty of God in the sense of His entire freedom—the total reasons for action being the same—to will the exact opposite of that which He does will in relation to the salvation or perdition of men. Since God's *right* to exercise mercy, based on the atonement, is absolute, and since His *right* to exercise justice, on the ground of the guilt of man, is, also, absolute, His action in deciding to bestow salvation upon some and to withhold it from others, cannot be determined by the mere consideration of His *rights*. By what, then, will He be determined in His dealing with men? It is as certain as that God lives, that if He can meet all the claims of His truth, justice, righteousness, holiness, etc., as fully by decreeing the final salvation as by decreeing the final damnation of a sinner, He will do the former; because the

exercise of mercy is, while the exercise of wrath is not, congenial to His nature: "As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth." The declaration, then, "He hath mercy on whom He will and whom He will He hardeneth," means that, in bestowing or withholding salvation, His action is *not founded upon human desert*, that He is free to act in disregard of the assumed rights and claims of men to His favor. But it does not teach that He is free in every sense of the term—absolutely free to bring to heaven those whom He consigns to Hell—absolutely free to save or to destroy all mankind. Does this involve a denial that salvation is of grace? Does grace cease to be grace because the infinitely merciful God *cannot* refrain from bestowing it in any instance in which He can do so consistently with the claims of wisdom and righteousness?

In dealing with Pharaoh God did not at first act upon His *right* to exercise wrath, but made extraordinary disclosures of light and goodness which ought to have subdued the monarch's proud heart, and to have caused him to obey the divine command to let the children of Israel go. God hardened Pharaoh, in part, by his goodness, as He hardened Judas and the Jews in the time of Christ, and as He hardens men now under the preaching of the gospel; and, in

part, by those retributive judgments which, coming upon him in his attitude of defiance, could not but increase his obduracy. "It is by the operation of a law of man's nature as God created it, that *he who will not turn, at last cannot*. And God, who established that law, is said in Scripture to *do that which occurs under it or results from it*. Thus 'whom He will He hardens,' becomes equivalent to: *He has framed at His pleasure the moral constitution of man, according to which the rebellious sinner is at last obdurate.*" Vaughan, Epistle to the Romans, IX. 18.

(19-21) We regard verses 20 and 21 not as an argument in reply to the objection urged in verse 19, but rather as a challenge of the objector's right to call in question the ways of God. The truth affirmed in verse 21, "Hath not the potter a right over the clay, from the same lump to make one part a vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor," is God's entire freedom to deal with men involved in sin and guilt *wholly regardless of their assumed claim and right to His favor*. "When man goes the length of making a god whom he affects to bind by his own rights, God then puts on His majesty, and appears in all His reality as a free God, before whom man is a mere nothing, like the clay in the hand of the potter. Such was Paul's atti-

tude when acting as God's advocate, in his suit with Jewish Pharisaism." (Lange.)

What was said above, under verse 18, applies here: God's *actual procedure* in exercising mercy towards some and justice towards others cannot be determined by the simple considerations of His *rights*. By what, then, will His diverse courses of action be determined? To illustrate divine things by human, which is the only way we can apprehend them, suppose the potter had spent a vast fortune and had subjected himself to extraordinary hardships and sufferings to gain the skill and the means to make of the clay vessels unto honor; that he not only had no desire, but was most unwilling, to use any of the clay in making vessels unto dishonor; by what principle would he be guided in the exercise of his power and skill? Because he had the *right* to use the clay as he pleased, would he be determined by the mere fact of his *right*, and make vessels unto dishonor as freely as unto honor? Or would he use all the clay which he could possibly use in making vessels unto honor? The application of the illustration to God's dealings with mankind is obvious. God's action in making some men vessels unto honor and others vessels unto dishonor, is no more determined by his *rights* than is the action of the potter in the case supposed. But, says the ob-

jector, the clay is all alike, "*it is the same lump.*" Yes, precisely the same in every respect which Paul's argument required him to consider. Mankind are all alike destitute of merit, all alike burdened with great demerit, all alike in the bondage of sin and exposed to the divine displeasure on grounds of justice. But their sameness in these fundamental respects does not necessarily imply their identity in every respect in which God may see fit to regard them under a system of gracious probation. The next verse shows that God ordains no man to eternal death merely because He has the *right* to do so; for though "willing"—though "moved by His immanent and eternal indignation"—"to show His wrath and to make His power known, He endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted—self-fitted—unto destruction."

The sovereignty of God, then, which the ninth chapter of Romans teaches is his power and right to deal with men as He pleases *regardless of their alleged merits or claims to his favor*; to determine their final glorification, or their final perdition, as he may choose, acting in view of all the reasons before His infinite mind. But it is not a sovereignty of mere power, of bare will, a prerogative in the exercise of which He is absolutely free to will the exact opposite of that which He does will in relation to the destinies

of men; absolutely free to consign to hell those whom He can bring to heaven without prejudice to the glory of any of His perfections and the highest interests of His universal kingdom; absolutely free to choose one of two men and to reject the other between whom there is, even to His omniscient mind, *no difference*, or no difference which can furnish a reason, or cause, or condition, or occasion of His infinitely diverse decisions. To predicate of God such a sovereignty as this, is to deny His benevolence, and to ascribe to Him pure arbitrariness and caprice in dealing with mankind.

CHAPTER IX.

DR. WATTS' REPLY.

EIGHTH PAPER.

To the Editor of the Western Recorder:

If we accept their own account of the matter, the critics of the Old Bible and the Old Faith, are among the most unfortunate of theological writers. They are ever being misunderstood and misrepresented. None save the critical elite seem able to penetrate the inner-keep of their speculations. For ordinary mortals to call in question their scholastic furniture, or the justice of their critical, or doctrinal conclusions, is put down to the account of sheer presumption. It is surely a great pity that men of such literary culture and theological renown would not condescend, in their discussions of the momentous questions with which they are ever dealing, to express themselves in language so perspicuous that men of ordinary intelligence could not fail to know what they mean.

It appears that Dr. Northrup, in his articles on "The Sovereignty of God in Predestination, as Contained in the System of Strict Calvinism," has not fared any better than his critical and

theological compeers. His reviewer, he tells us in his rejoinder, which appears in the *Chicago Standard* of the 29th of December, is chargeable with no fewer than "a half dozen palpable and inexcusable misrepresentations." In fact, if his account of that review is to be accepted as correct, it is made up of one continuous series of misrepresentations. One of these alleged misrepresentations which has made him very indignant is that his reviewer has called him an Arminian, and has done so, directly or indirectly, between forty and fifty times. His reviewer will now venture to add another time to this list, and will endeavor to justify this addition. It is true he has sought to frame a theory intermediate between strict Calvinism and Arminianism, but his attempt is simply an attempt to achieve the impossible. Hence the difficulty a reviewer has in criticising his original articles, or attempting a reply to his rejoinder.

A few specimens of this species of intermediate theorizing may suffice. Contrasting Principal Cunningham with his reviewer, greatly to the disadvantage of the latter, he pronounces upon him an eulogium "as one of the very ablest expounders and defenders of the system of strict Calvinism." Having done this, he quotes from him the following words, which he describes "as strong and judicious." The words are: "It

is, we think, *unwarranted* and *presumptuous* to assert that even *the self-determining power of the will* (the italics are Dr. Northrup's) would prevent Him in whom we live and move and have our being, who is everywhere and at all times present in the exercise of all His perfections, who searcheth the heart and trieth the reins of the children of men, from superintending and directing all its movements according to the counsel of his own will." Of course it was through a mere oversight in copying that Dr. Northrup wrote *the* self-determining power of the will instead of *a* self-determining power of the will. The latter, however, is the expression used by Principal Cunningham, and was, doubtless, used instead of the former to prevent his readers from inferring that he held that there is in the soul of man an independent entity determining all his volitions irrespective of any other power or faculty of his nature. Dr. Cunningham carefully avoids endorsing, even by implication, the theory of *the self-determining power of the will*, and, as the context (the Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation, p. 511) shows that what he means in the passage in question, is that even were there such a power in the soul of man it is *unwarranted* and *presumptuous* to assert that it would prevent God from superintending and controlling all its movements ac-

according to the counsel of His own will. That is, there is nothing in the constitution of any man that could prevent God from converting him and presenting him faultless before His own presence without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

Such is the doctrine of Dr. Cunningham's "strong and judicious words." It is simply another way of saying what God Himself says (Isa. xliii. 13), "I will work and who shall let it?" Let us now see what the eulogist of these "judicious words" says in the very next column of the *Standard*: "According to the teaching of Scripture," he says, "there is in God a principle of absolute ethical limitation or self-restraint. He cannot deny Himself, He cannot lie, He cannot be tempted of evil, He cannot give His glory to another. The principle of God's necessary self-limitation or self-restraint is not His holiness or His love, but his *absolute ethical perfection*, of which holiness and love are the essence, and which is the rule and law of His will in all His acts in creation, providence, and redemption. Now it is on the ground of this fundamental truth of inspiration that we affirm our conviction that God will do the utmost that He can do to save every member of our race; the utmost that He can do having due regard to the universal and everlasting interests of His kingdom and

the glory of His name; that He will consign no man to hell whom He could bring to heaven and remain God, no man whom He could present faultless before the presence of His glory, acting in accordance with the supreme law of His absolute ethical perfection."

Now it will not do to say that there is no inconsistency between this account of God's ability in relation to the salvation of men and the doctrine of Dr. Cunningham, alleging that the latter has reference to obstacles in man, whereas the former has reference to an obstacle in God Himself, viz: His absolute ethical perfection, for there must, according to this theory, be an obstacle found in the man himself whom God cannot save, which discriminates him from those He can save. It is true the author of the theory finds an additional obstacle in the interests of the kingdom of God. These obstacles, however, whether of the one class or the other, are all external to Himself, and like the one contemplated by Principal Cunningham, are to be found, if found at all, in the subjective state of the moral agents with whom He has to do; and it is in His dealings with such agents, and no others, that His ethical perfection has anything to do.

Here, then, we have Dr. Northrup eulogizing Dr. Cunningham for teaching that there is no

obstacle to salvation in the soul of man—even taking the extreme case of *a* self-determining power of the will—which God cannot overcome, and immediately afterwards laying it down as an ultimate fact, and a doctrine of inspiration, that there are men whom God, do what he can, cannot save from hell and bring to heaven, and fathering the whole speculation on the ethical perfection of His own nature! And wherein does this ethical perfection consist which bars the way to the salvation of some men, and yet offers no obstacle to the rescue of others? We are informed that its essence, in other words, that wherein, in its very being it consists, is not holiness or love, and, in the same breath, we are told that its essence is holiness and love! Which of these two definitions are we to accept? Certainly the latter, for, after some hesitation, the author of the theory has given it as his final decision. Ethical perfection, then, if we are to accept this account of its very essence, consists of the combined virtues of holiness and love! The essence of ethical perfection, where ethical perfection exists in infinite perfection, is a perfection in which the attribute of justice finds no place! Perhaps Dr. Northrup has accepted Lubnitz's idea of justice, that it is benevolence guided by wisdom. Such is the doctrine which is to solve the problem of the sovereignty of

God in the conception and administration of the economy of redemption. Such is the principle laid down in this marvelous speculation by a theologian who regards himself as misrepresented because he does not get credit for teaching that Christ's work had reference to every element of the law—to the *precept* as well as to the penalty (which one would think implied its reference to justice)—a work wrought for the whole race! Just a word in passing in regard to this particular charge of misrepresentation, before proceeding to indicate the consequences of eliminating the attribute of justice from the essence of the ethical perfection of God. The basis on which the charge which he pronounces a misrepresentation was founded was the following statement: "The Scriptures seem to justify the position that prior to personal action men are, through the atonement, free from condemnation, that the judgment which, through the one offense of Adam, came upon all men to condemnation, was removed absolutely and forever by the one act of righteousness of Jesus Christ." Such was the ground on which his reviewer charged him with adopting the Arminian doctrine of Christ's work which omits its satisfaction of the precept and limits it to His atoning death. What is his vindication of his counter-charge of misrepresentation against his re-

viewer, which his readers are told is palpable and inexcusable? Well, here it is: He tells us that he followed the Revised Version [of Rom. v. 18], but confesses that "though we [he] did not say so" or "indicate our [his] view of the phrase 'one act of righteousness,' we [he] regarded it as denoting the whole work of Christ viewed as one single act of obedience." This latter statement subverts this attempt at vindication. He confesses that he did not indicate his view of the phrase, "one act of righteousness," but that he did regard it as denoting the whole work of Christ viewed as one single act of obedience, and yet he holds his reviewer guilty of a grave, a palpable, and an inexcusable misrepresentation for not knowing what he had not the condescension to tell him! But he has another ground for this grave impeachment of his reviewer. It is as follows: "The view imputed to us we discarded a quarter of a century ago, and have ever since taught that Christ's entire life from the time when He took the form of a servant to His expiring cry upon the cross—His life of perfect obedience and His life of constant suffering—constituted that perfect work on the ground of which God can Himself be just and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus."

This is excellent. His reviewer has read it with admiration and delight. He is glad that a quarter of a century ago Dr. Northrup discarded from his creed this element of Arminian theology, and has ever since taught one of the Calvinistic fundamentals. It is to be hoped that ere another quarter of a century passes he will discard all remaining elements of that system, and adopt that system which he has been endeavoring to overthrow—that system of strict Calvinism which, under God, achieved the disenthralment of the churches of the Reformation, both Lutheran and Reformed, from the spiritual bondage of the mystery of iniquity.

But it is difficult to see how this justifies him in his charge of misrepresentation. How could his reviewer know this piece of personal history? It may, perhaps, argue the reviewer himself unknown, but the fact is that he never heard of Dr. Northrup until his attention was drawn to his attack on the doctrine of "The Sovereignty of God in Predestination as Contained in the System of Strict Calvinism." Dr. Northrup's vindication of his counter-charge of misrepresentation, therefore, is a palpable failure. His reviewer had no means of unlocking the secrets of his bosom and finding out that he did not mean by the phrase, "one act of righteousness," what the words, as unexplained by him, plainly

mean, and he had no opportunity of finding out the fact which he is now glad to find out, that he, a quarter of a century ago, discarded that element of Arminianism which reduces Christ's atoning work to His death on Calvary.

But to return: What concord has this doctrine of the self-limitation of God which renders it impossible for Him, owing to His ethical perfection, to save from hell, and bring to heaven those who are ultimately lost—what concord has it with the doctrine, that “prior to personal action men are, through the atonement, free from condemnation; that the judgment which, through the one offense of Adam came upon all men to condemnation, was removed absolutely and forever by the one act of righteousness of Jesus Christ”? If the condemnation, which in consequence of the sin of Adam came upon the entire race—the whole and not simply a part of the condemnation—was removed from all men, by the work of Christ, who satisfied the claims of the law of God both in regard to its precept and its penalty, how comes it, that after, and despite the removal of this condemnation, that is, after the satisfaction of all the claims of the moral law, there still remain obstacles in the case of some men, yea, if the theory be true, in the case of millions of the race, which forbid a God of infinite ethical perfection saving them

from hell and taking them to heaven? Very different is the conclusion which the above premises warrant. If our Saviour did for all the race of Adam what Dr. Northrup here alleges He did, a God of infinite ethical perfection is bound, by the very perfection of His ethical nature, to save every individual of the family of man. To teach that any man whose sins were laid upon Christ and by Him expiated, may be lost, and to father his loss upon the ethical perfection of God is to set at naught all idea of ethics whether human or Divine, and to outdo all that Arminianism ever dreamt. Can a God of infinite ethical perfection, who with His own hand laid the awful burden of the sinner's guilt upon the adorable Surety, repudiate His own covenant engagements and withhold from Him the reward purchased at the cost of His most precious blood? To say so, is tantamount to an impeachment of the truth and justice of our covenant-keeping God.

Belfast, Ireland, February, 1893.

CHAPTER X.

DR. WATTS' REPLY.

NINTH PAPER.

To the Editor of the Western Recorder:

In the forefront of the list of palpable and inexcusable misrepresentations wherewith Dr. Northrup charges his reviewer, stands the following: "Dr. Watts charges us with rejecting the Calvinistic and accepting the Arminian view as to the relation of regeneration to faith and repentance. He says, 'There are three really turning points in the controversy; the federal relation of Adam, the effect of his fall on himself and his posterity, and the necessity of regeneration in order to faith and repentance. These points are in the inventory of Dr. Northrup's arraignment of Calvinism.' And yet in our second article occurs the following statement: 'Though man has a measure of freedom, a remainder of liberty the exercise of which, under divine grace, may have a decisively favorable bearing upon his eternal destiny, it is not an ability by virtue of which he can will himself from darkness into life, can create himself anew in Jesus Christ. He is, of course, not passive,

listless, inert, but is active, often intensely so, before and at the time of renewal; but in the origination of the new life he has no agency. * * Thus repentance and faith are, in the logical order, subsequent to regeneration, which is the exclusive work of God, and which necessarily presupposes an eternal purpose of salvation."

Had the reviewer said no more there would have been ground for the charge. All this is true, but it is only a part of the truth. It will be remembered by the readers of the *Western Recorder*, however, that there were mentioned, in the review complained of, three turning points of divergence between Calvinism and Arminianism, viz: the federal headship of Adam, human ability, and the necessity of regeneration in order to faith and repentance. In the course of the review each of these points was expounded so that the reader could have no doubt about the nature or extent of the divergence the reviewer intended to express by them. The points were not left as mere bald items of an inventory, but were explained and discussed, and their import and drift placed beyond all likelihood of misapprehension by arguments advanced in support of the Calvinistic, and in opposition to the Arminian view in regard to each of them.

Now, what Dr. Northrup has done in order to make out a charge of misrepresentation is, that he has taken as the ground of it the third item in the foregoing inventory just as it was baldly enumerated, without taking into account article vi., in which he not only gets credit for teaching the necessity for regenerating grace, but in which arguments are drawn from his recognition of this necessity in opposition to the Arminian position avowed by him, that the provisions of grace are universal. In opposition to the doctrine that the provisions of grace are universal, the reviewer availed himself of Dr. Northrup's account of these provisions, which embraced "the quickening touch of the truth and of the Holy Spirit." It was contended that by the "truth," if it meant one of the provisions of grace, must be understood the Gospel of Christ, and the utter unwarrantableness of alleging that this element of the provisions was universal, was pointed out as conclusive against any such claim. This argument was strengthened and made absolutely decisive by a reference to the conjunct provision recognized by Dr. Northrup, viz: the Holy Spirit. In this connection the reviewer said: "Now what is true of the extent and prevalence of the truth as it is in Jesus, is equally true of the extent of the gift of the Holy Spirit, as the ap-

plier of the redemption purchased by Christ. Even the text with which Dr. Northrup closes his sketch implies this. That text proclaims the readiness of the Heavenly Father to give His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him; yes, to them that ask Him, but how can those who have never heard of the Father or of His Holy Spirit, ask Him for this unspeakable gift? Here, then, is another fatal defect, and when combined with its conjunct addition, 'the truth,' it completes the arraignment and impeachment of the theory, and furnishes a still further warrant to challenge and reject it. These two conditions are correlative, and for redemptive purposes inseparable and indispensable. In so far as adults are concerned, 'the truth' is indispensable as the sword of the Spirit, and, apart from the Spirit, the Word is but the savour of death unto death. As these conjunct conditions, *recognized by Dr. Northrup as necessary*, are not now and never have been, universally prevalent, his theory is made void, and the system of which it constitutes an essential element is not only imperiled, but subverted."

How is it that Dr. Northrup in his reply, has not replied to this refutation of one of the principal doctrines of his system? No one who has read his reply and has not read the review would suspect that such a subject had formed one of

the most important and determining points in the discussion. Yet so it is. He has directed his energies to the framing of what he is pleased to entitle "palpable and inexcusable misrepresentations," but he has allowed his doctrine of the universality of the provisions of grace to go by default. He has made the arraignment of it by his reviewer at the bar of the divine administration both in the Kingdom of Providence and the Kingdom of Grace, and has heard the sentence of condemnation pronounced against it by both, and yet has not a word to say even in mitigation of sentence. One's surprise, however, is somewhat abated when it is found that chapter sixth, in which this subject is formally discussed, sets aside the ground on which the chief and most formidable of all the misrepresentations urged by him, has been based. In justification of this claim it is only necessary to quote a few additional sentences from this same sixth chapter.

Immediately after the passage cited above, we have the following: "*Dr. Northrup does not hold that the grace conferring this 'plenary power' amounts to regenerating or forgiving grace. He says such grace is bestowed afterwards, upon those who struggle against the evil tendencies of their nature, and who strive to exercise the faith and repentance which the Bible requires.*" It will be seen,

at once, that this qualifying clause in the statement of the theory does not necessitate any modification of the argument now advanced in refutation of it. The condition attached to this supplementary blessing, and on which the bestowal of it is hinged, is a condition which men have not been placed in a position to fulfill. How can a man strive "to exercise the repentance and faith which the Bible requires" who has never heard of the Bible or the Saviour it reveals. It is manifest, then, that Dr. Northrup makes the bestowal of regenerating, forgiving grace depend upon a condition which the sinner, being still unregenerate, must fulfill, while it is equally manifest that the overwhelming majority of the human race have not been placed, either subjectively or objectively, in a position to fulfill it. If "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Rom.10:17), this theory of the way of life is negatived, for "how shall men believe on Him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent?" The doctrine of the Apostle is that the knowledge of the Lord is indispensable to faith, and faith to salvation. If Dr. Northrup believes this, how can he allege that the provisions of grace are universal, seeing that the requisite knowledge has not been com-

municated to all men in all ages of the world's history? This one fact is fatal to the theory that the provisions of grace are universal, as it is to "Arminianism which requires" as it does, "for its support, that 'every man'—every child of Adam—from the beginning of the world to the end of it, should be placed in a position to obtain eternal life. The world's history thus far, and the testimony of the Word of God, prove that the requisite conditions of the theory have no existence in fact, while they proclaim and illustrate that Divine Sovereignty in Predestination which Dr. Northrup has so eagerly yet vainly assailed."

Now it will be seen that the account above given of Dr. Northrup's theory is, 1. That "the *plenary power* bestowed upon *every man*" only enables him, so far as faith and repentance are concerned, to *strive* to exercise these graces. 2. It is equally manifest that the sketch credits Dr. Northrup with teaching, that before the sinner can actually exercise these graces he must receive the gift of "*regenerating and forgiving grace*." The reviewer is careful to state Dr. Northrup's position on this point, both negatively and positively. He has stated what he does not hold, and he has stated what he does hold. Prior to regeneration, according to the reviewer's account of his creed, Dr. Northrup

holds that the sinner can merely *strive to exercise* the faith and repentance which the Bible requires, and that it is only *after* he is gifted with regenerating and forgiving grace he *can exercise* these saving graces. The reviewer will not imitate Dr. Northrup in hurling against him charges of misrepresentation, but surely, in common justice and in all fairness, he was bound, in the interpretation of the item of the general inventory on which he has based so grave a charge, to have taken into account the exposition of that item given at such length, and with such explicitness, in the sixth chapter of the review. However, in looking into that chapter again, the reviewer is not surprised that Dr. Northrup did not like to cultivate much acquaintance with it. The chief topic of that chapter is one of the Arminian fundamentals to which he has set his hand and seal, viz: that the provisions of grace are universal. In contravention of the claim advanced, it was pointed out, that if the claim meant anything serviceable to the cause in whose behalf it was made, it must mean that the whole human race, in the individuality of its membership, throughout its entire history, from Adam to Moses, and from Moses to Christ, and from Christ to the present hour, must have been furnished with the means of grace, and that as the all-essential elements of these

means were not simply truth, but *the* truth as it is in Jesus, that is the Gospel, and the Holy Spirit, the claim bears the stamp of its own condemnation emblazoned on its own forehead.

One can understand, in some measure, how it came to pass that a man enamoured of a theory of which the universality of the means of grace was one of the fundamentals, should feel an instinctive aversion to a chapter which not only placed it in peril, but proved it to be historically untrue—a flat contradiction of the facts of human history.

Let us now enumerate the points embraced in this section of Dr. Northrup's theory. These are: 1. That under the universal grace *every man* is endowed with *plenary ability* to *strive* to exercise the faith and repentance which the *Bible* requires. 2. That ability to *actually* exercise these two graces is subsequently bestowed by the communication of regenerating, forgiving grace to those who, being as yet unregenerate, fulfill the condition specified, viz: *striving* to repent and believe, in the sense which the *Bible* requires. 3. That the conditions specified by Dr. Northrup as necessary to the transition from *striving* to repent and believe, to *positive, actual, believing* and *repenting*, are the instrumentality of the Word and the agency of the Holy Spirit. 4. That neither of these indispensable provisions

has been vouchsafed to the vast majority of the human race. 5. That, notwithstanding, the provisions of grace are universal.

Now, this is no mere incidental element of Dr. Northrup's theory. He has placed it in the forefront of his attack on Calvinism. It enters into the very essence of his theology; and yet it is negated by the history of our race, both sacred and secular. To allege that *every man* has been endowed with *plenary ability* "to strive to exercise the *faith and repentance which the Bible requires,*" or that he has been furnished with the conditions on which the *actual exercise* of these graces depends, is to gainsay the joint testimony of the Divine Oracles and human history. How its author could concoct such a theory without detecting its palpable incongruities, is a problem his reviewer feels himself incompetent to solve. Dr. Northrup has acknowledged the logical coherence of Calvinism; his reviewer must be excused if he cannot reciprocate the courtesy.

N. B.—The next article will deal with his treatment of the federal headship of Adam.

Belfast, Ireland, March, 1893.

CHAPTER XI.

DR. WATTS' REPLY.

TENTH PAPER.

To the Editor of the Western Recorder:

As the heading of Dr. Northrup's original articles shows, they were designed to disprove the doctrine of "The Sovereignty of God in Predestination, as Contained in the System of Strict Calvinism." The Calvinistic doctrine on this subject is very clearly expressed in the Westminster Assembly's Shorter Catechism in answer to the question "Did God leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery?" Such is the question, and the following is the answer given by that great Assembly: "God having, out of his mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace, to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer."

Such, according to the System of strict Calvinism which Dr. Northrup has undertaken to overthrow, is the condition of those whom, from all eternity, God, out of His mere good pleasure, has determined, through covenant engage-

ment with His own Son, to redeem and gift with eternal life; and the doctrine it teaches is, that God was entirely free in selecting some from among the mass of fallen men and making them the subjects of His saving grace, and that it was of His mere good pleasure He made provision for saving any of our fallen race. To this doctrine Dr. Northrup objects. He cannot brook the idea that God was at liberty to leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery into which they were brought by the fall. As has been shown in a previous article, he holds that there is no warrant in reason or revelation for the view that it was morally possible for God to purpose to create our first parents, to permit the fall and the development of the successive generations of their posterity, and to make no provision for their salvation. The previous article has dealt at large with this *ex cathedra* utterance. As there shown it contravenes the whole history of redemption. What it alleges God could not, by any moral possibility, do, is the very thing He has demonstrated His absolute right to do. Dr. Northrup tells us that it was not morally possible for God to make no provision for the salvation of fallen man, yet what is the fact? The palpable historical fact is, that for untold myriads of fallen men, the requisite provision has not been made. Ac-

According to the Constitution of the Economy, the provision must embrace two things; there must be an atonement, and that atonement must be made known. If salvation be by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as the great propitiation, how can those who have never heard of Christ or His atonement be said to have been provided with the means of salvation? Dr. Northrup's theory, therefore, is disproved by the actual procedure of the author of our salvation. His theory is, in fact, a mere rationalistic speculation evolved out of his own consciousness, and advocated in the face of the entire history of the race, both sacred and secular. As shown already, the work of Christ was such as to make it morally impossible not to make it known to all for whom it was wrought. The question, then, is forced upon us, how is it that, under the righteous administration of Jehovah, it has not, thus far, been made known to millions upon millions of fallen men, whereas the knowledge of it has been vouchsafed to others? The system of strict Calvinism answers with our Lord, under like circumstances—"Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." It resolves the problem into the mere good pleasure of God. Dr. Northrup is not satisfied with this decision and comes forward with a so-

lution which, it is to be presumed, he thinks solves the mystery.

Commenting on the terms "good pleasure," "the counsel of His will," "seemed good in His sight," he asks: "But what do these phrases mean? Do they teach that in making the selection of some men and resolving to save them, God was not influenced by anything existing in them or foreseen in them by which they were distinguished from other men; that there is no difference in men to which God has respect in choosing one man rather than another; that the total reasons for action remaining the same He was entirely free to elect those reprobated and to reprobate those elected—able to decree the salvation of all or the damnation of all, without prejudice to the glory of any of His attributes? This," he says, "is the doctrine of God's sovereignty which we call in question. The ninth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans is the portion of Scripture which is most frequently and confidently appealed to in support of this doctrine. If the Calvinistic doctrine of God's Sovereignty in Predestination is not in this chapter it is not in the New Testament.

It may be difficult to believe that the writer of this paragraph is the person who is so indignant with his reviewer for calling him an Arminian. His reviewer would ask, What is the doctrine

here avowed, if it be not Arminianism? Dr. Northrup has great admiration for the moderation and judiciousness of Principal Cunningham, and may, therefore, excuse a quotation of his opinion on this point. "The main questions," the Principal says, "which have been usually discussed among divines concerning the divine decrees in general, or predestination in its widest sense, have been these: 1. Are the divine decrees or purposes in regard to all the events which constitute the history of the world conditional or not? 2. Are they unchangeable or not? Calvinists hold that God's decrees or purposes in regard to everything that was to come to pass are unconditional and unchangeable, while Arminians, or anti-Calvinists deny this, and maintain that they are conditional and changeable." There can be no doubt that according to the above account of the divine decrees the divine determinations are conditional, for if we are to accept it they are, in every instance, conditioned on something *foreseen* in the subjects of the decree. As Dr. A. A. Hodge says in his "Outlines," the only question which touches the true matter in debate is, What is the ground of the eternal predestination of individuals to salvation? Is it the foreseen faith and repentance of the individuals themselves, or the sovereign good pleasure of God? Every Chris-

tian must take one side or the other of this question. If he takes the side which makes foreseen faith the ground, he is an Arminian, no matter what else he holds. If he takes the side which makes the good pleasure of God the ground, he is a Calvinist."

It is true Dr. Northrup does not specify faith as the foreseen ground of the Divine choice. All he alleges is, that there must be something in the subjects chosen which furnishes a reason of the choice. God's sovereignty is not "a prerogative in the exercise of which He is absolutely free to will the exact opposite of that which He does will in relation to the destinies of men; absolutely free to consign to hell those whom He can bring to heaven without prejudice to the glory of any of His perfections and the highest interests of His universal kingdom; absolutely free to choose one of two men and to reject the other between whom there is *no difference* (the italics are Dr. Northrup's), or no difference which can furnish a reason, or cause, or condition, or occasion of His infinitely diverse decisions. To predicate of God such a sovereignty as this is to deny His benevolence, and to ascribe to Him pure arbitrariness and caprice in dealing with mankind."

It is obvious that the position taken in this paragraph is the Arminian position, viz: that

the creature furnishes the "reason, or cause, or condition, or occasion" of the divine decision. So far as the principal is concerned, it matters not what the subjective quality may be which furnishes the "reason, or cause, or condition, or occasion" of the divine decision, the divine decision is determined by it, and the decision therefore cannot, in any proper sense of the term, be said to be a free divine determination. On the contrary, the divine purposes and actions in the moral government of the race, are subject to, and determined by, the race itself, some of its members furnishing the "reason, or cause, or condition, or occasion" of the decree of life, while others furnish the "reason, or cause, or condition, or occasion" of the decree of death. Such are the circumstances under which God acts in determining the destinies of the two classes, and Dr. Northrup informs us that if His purposes are not determined by the difference between these two classes, He is chargeable with "pure arbitrariness and caprice in dealing with mankind." Such is Dr. Northrup's account of the divine decree in the matter of man's salvation, and yet he is deeply offended with his reviewer because he represents him as denying the doctrine of the decrees of God! It appears that he can claim the right to challenge the sovereignty of God in the predestination of men

to eternal life, or death, and to be at liberty to place the determination in the hands of fallen guilty men, and yet be regarded as an advocate of the doctrine of the divine decrees! The readers of the *Chicago Standard* may be so distracted by the forebodings of the theological systems of Heathendom and Christendom, which are to be represented in the "World's First Parliament of Religions," in September next, that they may overlook the incongruities of this theological speculation, but the reviewer is persuaded that the readers of the *Western Recorder* do not need any formal process of argumentation to satisfy them that a decree framed under the circumstances hypothecated by Dr. Northrup, is not a divine determination, whatever else it may be!

But now the question arises, whence the *differentiæ*, or, as the apostle puts it, "Who maketh thee to differ? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? but if thou didst receive it why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" (I. Cor. iv. 7.) According to the principle underlying this passage, all that by which one is made to differ from another, all that could furnish a basis for a divine choice, is not from man but from God, for the principle holds good in regard to natural as well as spiritual endowments. It is just as true that those subjective

constitutional qualities which men bring with them into the world, and by which one man is distinguished from another, are from God, as it is that those gifts which the Holy Spirit distributes to His servants for the edifying of the body of Christ, "dividing to every man severally as He will," are divinely bestowed. Now, on what principle are these constitutional *differentiæ* conferred? Clearly, if Dr. Northrup will avoid charging the Author of them with "pure arbitrariness and caprice," he must find in the subjects on whom they are bestowed some "reason, or cause, or condition, or occasion" for the divine action. But as these *differentiæ* are themselves those qualities by which one man is distinguished from another, there cannot be assumed any antecedent *differentiæ* which could possibly be assigned as "a reason, or cause, or condition, or occasion" of the divine action in the bestowal of them. Dr. Northrup's charge of "arbitrariness" and "caprice" which he has preferred against the system of strict Calvinism, therefore, recoils upon his own head, for he can find no "reason" for the bestowal of those personal, constitutional peculiarities by which one man is distinguished from another. The reviewer is persuaded that he will not venture to carry out his theory and charge the Author of these personal characteristics with "arbitrariness," or "ca-

price," and yet how can he avoid making the charge? In a word, he has tried to solve a problem from the solution of which even that Apostle who had a deeper insight into the mysteries of redemption than any of his brethren, shrank, exclaiming as he surveyed the history of God's dealings with the race, both in their fall and their recovery, "O, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God; *how unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out.*" This problem he has tried to solve, and the principle on which he has proceeded has not only proved inadequate to the task, but has environed him hopelessly with the very same difficulties wherewith he imagined he had confronted and confounded the doctrine of the divine sovereignty in Predestination, as contained in the system of strict Calvinism.

Nor is this all. The principle reverses the relation of the divine foreknowledge to the divine decree. If we are to accept the theory we must hold, that it is *something foreseen* in the subjects of the divine choice, or of the divine reprobation which determines the divine decision regarding them, whether for life or death. That is, God *foresees something* by which the one class is distinguished from the other, and this something furnishes the "reason, or cause, or condition, or occasion" of His decree. Is this a theory

that can bear inspection? Does it not justify all that the reviewer alleged against the doctrine of its author at the outset? Does it not virtually dethrone Jehovah? Is it not manifest that it takes the government of His moral agents out of the hands of God? and does it not represent Him as occupying the position of a mere spectator, whose line of action is determined by the creatures of His hand?

It had saved Dr. Northrup from the adoption of this erroneous Arminian principle, if, instead of criticising the Apostle Paul's argument for the divine sovereignty in Predestination, as presented in the ninth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, he had read, with care, what the Apostle says in regard to this same principle in the third chapter. After bringing in both Jew and Gentile guilty before God, and stopping every mouth, he proceeds: "But now apart from the law a righteousness of God hath been manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ unto all them that believe; for there is *no distinction*; for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God; being justified *freely by His grace* through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Dr. Northrup says there is a *difference* that distinguishes one man from another, which justifies God in

his choice of the one rather than the other. Paul says there is *no distinction* which could furnish a reason for God's action in the case, and asserts that He acts *freely* in justifying, and does so *out of mere grace*. In a word, Paul discards, as prejudicial to the doctrine of salvation by grace, that principle which constitutes the corner-stone of Dr. Northrup's theory.

Belfast, Ireland, March, 1893.

CHAPTER XII.

DR. WATTS' REPLY.

ELEVENTH PAPER.

To the Editor of the Western Recorder:

Another of the misrepresentations which Dr. Northrup charges upon his reviewer is that he represents him as denying "the fundamental doctrine that salvation is of grace and not of debt." * * "The Arminian theory here imputed to us," he says, "we disavowed and repudiated in the articles under review." In the very next paragraph, however, we have the following confession: "The reviewer had, possibly, the following paragraph in mind when making the above allegations. Having made a quotation from Dr. Candlish, we remarked: What warrant is there in reason or revelation for the view here presented, that it was morally possible for God to purpose to create our first parents, to permit the fall and the development of the successive generations of their posterity, and to make no provision for their salvation? All we *know*, all that there is any warrant for affirming is, that the plan of the universe which

God adopted because most worthy of Himself, included, as eternal and essential elements, the creation of man, the permission, or nonprevention of the fall and redemption through Jesus Christ. That the plan would have been equally perfect, or that it would have been worthy of comparison with the existing plan—the element of redemption being left out—is what no man knows or can know, and what, therefore no man has a right to affirm. But the position here taken does not imply that as regards the *rights* or claims of men, God was under obligation to provide salvation; but only that the present plan, embracing the certainty of the fall and the purpose of redemption, is most congruous with His nature, expressing most perfectly His infinite perfections.”

In bringing this passage to the attention of his readers, Dr. Northrup has simply vindicated his reviewer against the charge of misrepresentation in this particular instance. In it he denies the warrant of any man to affirm “that it was *morally possible* for God to purpose to create our first parents, to permit the fall and the development of the successive generations of their posterity and to make no provision for their salvation.” If this be not an express and explicit denial of the Scripture doctrine that salvation is of grace, it is certainly difficult to

imagine what else the writer means. To assert that there is no warrant in reason or revelation for the view that it was *morally possible* for God to purpose the creation, fall, and development of the human race, and make no provision for their salvation, is simply another way of saying that salvation is not of grace. What it is morally impossible for God to do He cannot do, and if it was morally impossible for Him to create man and permit him to fall without making provision for his salvation, then He was under obligation, the highest obligation under which a moral being could be placed, to make that provision. To allege that a provision made in pursuance of a moral obligation is of grace and not of debt, is just to say and unsay the same thing in the same sentence.

Dr. Northrup thinks he has safe-guarded the doctrine of salvation by grace by alleging that "the position here taken does not imply that as regards the rights or claims of men, God was under obligation to provide salvation; but only that the present plan, embracing the certainty of the fall and the purpose of redemption, is most congruous with His nature, expressing most perfectly His infinite perfections." The problem with which Dr. Northrup has undertaken to deal will not admit of the severance he has here tried to effect. Obligation on the part

of God, and "rights" and "claims" on the part of men, are morally inseparable. It is the position to which, as Dr. Northrup contends, the divine purpose has brought the race, that presents the problem, and he, himself, by using the term, "*morally possible*," admits that the problem is a moral problem. Leave out man *as fallen*, and there is no problem to be solved. The question of the morality of the divine action in the case has no meaning except on the assumption that it would have been incongruous with the infinite perfections of God to have failed to provide salvation for man when he fell, and any such assumption is utterly irreconcilable with the Scripture doctrine that salvation is of grace.

But it is only when we take into account the character and extent of the provision needed to meet the case of fallen man, that the weakness and unprofitableness of Dr. Northrup's theory become manifest.

In the first place, instead of there being, on the part of God, a *moral impossibility* in the way of His not making provision for man's salvation, there was a *moral obstacle* in the way of His interposing for man's deliverance, the removal of which is represented in the Scriptures as revealing the manifold wisdom of God. The justice of Jehovah barred the way of the efflux of His love. Before His love could flow forth to

pardon, and justify, and restore, the claims of justice must be met. The provision for meeting these claims furnishes a subject into which the angels desire to look, and one which will task their mightiest intellects throughout eternity, as it will be the theme of the church whether militant or triumphant. No member of that redeemed host, whether bowing on the footstool or prostrate before the throne, will be likely to adopt Dr. Northrup's theory, and moderate the fervor of his devotion by calling to remembrance, as that theory suggests, that it was not "*morally possible*" for God to make no provision for his salvation. As the redeemed in glory gaze in adoring gratitude upon the enthroned Lamb, they will not be likely to introduce into the universal song the note of discord which that theory implies, that God might not have spared His own Son, and was under obligation to deliver Him up for us all.

2. The nature of the work by which the barrier, presented in the justice of God, has been removed, must be taken into account. That work had reference, as the reviewer is happy to learn from Dr. Northrup's reply, to the preceptive as well as the penal claims of the law. The all-important, all-determining questions hence emerging are: What was the nature of this reference? and what were its effects? Did the

work of Christ meet, and exhaust by meeting them, all the claims of the law preceptive and penal? If so, if He did, did He thereby establish any legal claim on behalf of those for whom He obeyed and suffered and died? As the law whose entire claims He met was not a self-existent, objective, self-administering entity, but, on the contrary, the law of a Divine Lawgiver who, with His own hand, carried into execution its penal sanctions, thereby expiating the guilt of the sins which in the exercise of His own sovereign good pleasure He had laid on His Son as His people's Substitute, and moreover, through His most perfect obedience, meeting all the requirements of its most holy precepts, surely it must follow that for all whom He represented in that august transaction, He won, in law and justice, deliverance from the curse of the law, justification, and eternal life. It is impossible that such a work to which He was set apart and commissioned by the Father, should be wrought by such a worker, and accepted as satisfactory, as His resurrection and enthronement prove, without securing, in justice, all that He obeyed and died to win.

3. Equally manifest must it be, that this entire work was necessary in order to the salvation of men. When, therefore, Dr. Northrup speaks of it not being *morally possible* for God

not to make provision for man's salvation, he must mean, if he means anything to help his theory, that it was not *morally possible* for Him not to require at the hands of His own Son the sore travail of His early life, the agony of Gethsemane, and the death pangs, and spiritual, poignant anguish of Calvary.

But this is not all. If we are to accept the testimony of Scripture something more than this was needed to complete the provision requisite for the salvation of men. Obligation to provide the ransom carries with it additional obligations to make it known. These obligations thicken and multiply and gather ever-increasing *moral* force, at every step and stage of Christ's humiliation. To require at the hands of Christ such a work and make no provision for the announcement of it *to all for whom He wrought it*, were to violate the most sacred principles of the Divine administration. We may rest assured that there is no claim which Christ has established by the fulfillment of the stipulations of the Covenant of Grace, which will not be met by Him who assigned Him such momentous task. While justice occupies the throne that work shall have its full reward. Merit in heaven is not an empty name. It is correlative to justice and shall meet with its full and righteous reward.

5. Now surely it must be due to Christ, as the very first item in His reward, that provision be made for the annunciation of His work to all whose sins he bore. A universal provision—and Dr. Northrup's fundamental is that the provisions of grace are universal—a universal provision, hemmed in and restricted by a limited proclamation, is certainly an anomaly which requires readjustment if this theory of "the universal provisions of grace" is ever to gain currency among intelligent men. How men are to acquire "*plenary ability*," under "the universal provisions of grace," even "to strive to exercise the faith and repentance which the Bible requires," who never heard of these provisions, or of the Bible, is a problem Dr. Northrup has not attempted to solve in his reply, although it was presented for his consideration as one of the most formidable of all the criticisms urged against his theory by his reviewer. He has offered no solution, for the simple reason that there is no solution of the anomaly possible. The provisions of grace are not universal, and yet Dr. Northrup would have us believe that it was not "*morally possible*" for God not to make provision for the salvation of men. It is respectfully submitted that if he cannot reconcile these two discordant, antagonistic positions, his theory is discredited and is on the verge of dissolution.

6. The justice of the foregoing criticisms will be all the more manifest when we take into account what the Scriptures and all Christian experience attest, viz: that the proclamation of the work of Christ, so far as adults are concerned, is indispensable to salvation. Now if salvation be by faith, and if faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God, what are we to think of this theory of Dr. Northrup's which assumes that God is under moral obligation to make provision for the salvation of men, and actually affirms that He has done so, while the fact is notorious that the vast majority of the human race have never heard of any such provisions? In his original articles he admitted, as elements of the provisions of grace, which he alleged were universal, "the touch of truth and of the Holy Spirit." His reviewer replied that the only "truth" admissible in the case, must be the truth of the Gospel, and that this, apart from the agency of the Spirit, could not awaken the sinner from spiritual death to spiritual life. Dr. Northrup had wound up this sketch of "the provisions of grace," by a reference to the readiness of the Father to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him. The stricture of his reviewer on this reference was: "Yes; to them that ask Him; but how shall those ask who have never heard of either the Father or the Holy Spirit?"

Here was certainly a very pertinent criticism, and as scriptural as it was pertinent. Surely Dr. Northrup was bound to believe it, and to prove that these two elements—the Gospel and the Holy Spirit—recognized by himself as indispensable elements of the provisions of grace, have been made known to the whole human race, in all its generations, from the beginning of its history till the present moment. The criticism not only imperils, but subverts his whole theory, and yet his reply has not a word to say on its behalf! His idea of universality seems to be something like Dr. Martensen's idea of ubiquity. The ubiquity of Christ's body, Dr. Martensen alleges, is not an *actual being*, but an *essential becoming*; and Dr. Northrup's provisions of grace are not, at present, universal, and have not been universal in the past, but while their universality is not in *actual being*, their universality is in *essential becoming*!

7. The feature of the economy with which Dr. Northrup's theory is in conflict, is the one wherein, if we are to accept the testimony of Scripture, its chief glory consists. As we have already seen, an economy whose provisions God was under the most sacred obligation to furnish cannot, with any regard to the right use of language, be called an economy of grace. However, when we consult the sacred Record on

this point, we find that the chief design of the economy is to illustrate and glorify the grace of God. Let a few testimonials suffice. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ; according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, *according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace* wherein He has made us accepted in the Beloved. In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, *according to the riches of His grace*. Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, *according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself*. In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated *according to the purpose of Him* who worketh all things *after the counsel of His own will*.” (Eph. 1:3–11.) “But God *who is rich in mercy* for his great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (*by grace ye have been saved*); and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: *that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding richness of His grace in His kindness*

toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works that no man should glory. For we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them." (Eph. 2:4-10.)

Such is the account of the design of the economy of Redemption given by the Holy Ghost through His servant Paul. Does it require any exposition or argument to show that it justifies the statement made above, "that the chief design of the economy is to illustrate and glorify the grace of God?" Dr. Northrup asks: "What warrant is there in reason or revelation for the view here presented [by Dr. Candlish] that it was *morally possible* for God to purpose to create our first parents, to permit the fall and development of the successive generations of their posterity, and make no provision for their salvation?" Such is the question, and such is the answer given by the Spirit of God. He affirms, again and again, that God was under no obligation, moral or otherwise, to make provision for the salvation of fallen men. He tells us this in terms evidently intended to place the absolute freedom of God in making the provision beyond all question. He tells us that He did it of His good pleasure, of the good pleasure of His will;

that He did it that the doing of it might be to the praise of the glory of His grace; and lest the Ephesians might not catch the drift of His testimony, He throws in a clause reminding them that it was by grace they had been saved, and that the ultimate design of His making such provision was, that in the ages to come He might show *the exceeding riches of His grace* in His kindness toward us by Christ Jesus. The reader has now before him, on the one hand, what Dr. Northrup says, and, on the other, what the Apostle Paul says, on the point at issue, and he must choose for himself under whose guidance he is to study the economy of grace. Let him remember, however, that what Dr. Northrup alleges God was morally bound to do *for the race*, as a matter of fact, God has not done, as the reviewer has shown, over and over again, in discussing the question regarding the universality of the provisions of grace. The logical goal of the theory is absolute Universalism.

Belfast, Ireland, March, 1893.

CHAPTER XIII.

DR. WATTS' REPLY.

TWELFTH PAPER.

To the Editor of the Western Recorder:

Dr. Northrup has undertaken to prove that the doctrine of God's sovereignty in Predestination, as contained in the system of strict Calvinism, has no support in the ninth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. Having such an object in view, he is rather unfortunate in his prefatory remarks. At the outset he gives such a sketch of the way of salvation and the scope of the epistle, as, if fairly interpreted and applied, must, in the estimate of all intelligent men, completely frustrate his design. He proceeds as follows: "In order that the fundamental point in controversy may be clearly seen, we remark: 1. That men are saved—attain to the purity and felicity of the heavenly world—because they exercise repentance towards God and faith in Jesus Christ. 2. That they exercise faith and repentance because the Holy Spirit renews them—originates in them a holy disposition which is the permanent basis of all holy exer-

cises. 3. That God regenerates them by His Spirit because He purposed to do so—their renewal being the execution of an eternal immutable purpose of grace. 4. That He purposed to renew them because it was ‘His good pleasure,’ ‘the counsel of His will,’ ‘seemed good in His sight.’” Having given this sketch, which as far as it goes is Calvinistic, Dr. Northrup immediately proceeds to give an exposition of the phrases, “counsel of His will” and “seemed good in His sight,” the first of which is, that we are not to regard them as implying that “in making the selection of some men and resolving to save them, God was not influenced by anything existing in them or foreseen in them by which they were distinguished from other men; that there is no *difference* (the italics are Dr. Northrup’s) in men to which God has respect in choosing one man rather than another; that the total reasons for action remaining the same, He was entirely free to elect those reprobated, and to reprobate those elected—able to decree the salvation of all or the damnation of all without prejudice to the glory of any of His attributes. This is the doctrine of God’s sovereignty, which we call in question. The ninth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans is the portion of Scripture which is most frequently and confidently appealed to in support of this doctrine. If the Calvinistic doc-

trine of God's sovereignty in predestination is not in this chapter, it is not in the New Testament"!!!

On this interpretation of these all-determining phrases enough has been said in the preceding article. One word in addition may, however, be allowed. Sir William Thompson (now Lord Kelvin) proposed, some years ago, as a solution of the origin of life on our planet, that it may have been imported through the advent of a fragment of another planet in which life previously existed. The criticism on Sir William's solution was, that it was no solution at all of the problem of the origin of life, as it merely removed the question from our planet to some neighboring orb. Dr. Northrup's solution of the problem of the sovereignty of God in predestination is manifestly open to the same criticism: it simply removes the question to a stage farther back. He tells us that the divine reason for choosing one man rather than another is something foreseen as existing in the one by which he is distinguished from the other. Will any intelligent man accept this as a solution of the mystery of the divine choice? Does not the question force itself upon us and demand an answer how came it to pass that the one chosen happened to possess those qualities which distinguished him from the one passed by and supplied

the requisite "reason," "condition," etc., for his selection? The basal distinction cannot be regarded as moral, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, and Dr. Northrup admits that the foreseen something is not something meritorious. The ground of the divine action, therefore, must be something in the mental constitution of the subjects of the divine choice which determines the divine purpose in their case. This brings us to the root of the whole controversy on the line laid down by Dr. Northrup. As both classes—those elected and those rejected—received their whole being from God—their whole being whether mental or physical—does it not follow, that the foreseen quality in which Dr. Northrup finds the "reason," or "condition," of the divine decree, is a "condition" furnished by God Himself in their creation? Let us take, as an illustration, the case of Jacob and Esau in this ninth chapter of Romans, on which Dr. Northrup makes the following comment: "It cannot be supposed, however, that in choosing Jacob instead of Esau, God did not act in view of *some difference* (the italics are Dr. Northrup's) between them—not a difference in the matter of merit, for of merit there could be no question—still some difference which rendered the former better fitted than the latter to be the depositary of the Messianic promise." No doubt,

as Dr. Northrup says, there was a difference between these two men, but the question at issue goes back of the "*existing* difference," to the creative action originating that difference. Did not that creative act make Jacob to differ from Esau and constitute him "a fitter depositary of the Messianic promise"? Now as there was no anterior quality foreseen in either case, which could have furnished a reason for conferring on these two sons of Isaac their distinctive personal characteristics, it must follow, that Dr. Northrup's solution is negatived by this test case. The decree to constitute Jacob diverse from Esau, must be resolved into the mere good pleasure of God, as it has no existing foreseen quality to rest on which could furnish "a reason," or "cause," or "condition" of the divine determination to bring these two men into existence.

Dr. Northrup adopts the opinion of some, who he alleges "are of the highest authority in New Testament interpretation," who hold "that nothing is said in these verses of the final destiny of either brother; that what is spoken of here is the position of the one and not of the other as the depositary of the promise to Abraham." It is much safer, however, to accept the *higher authority* of God's Word on this point. The Epistle to the Hebrews, chapter 12:16, refers to

the case of Esau, and settles it in a very different way from that of these *highest authorities*. The writer of that epistle admonishes those addressed, by a reference to the case of Esau, exhorting them "to look carefully lest there be any man that falleth short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby the many be defiled; lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one mess of meat sold his own birth-right. For ye know that even when he afterward desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected (for he found no place of repentance), though he sought it diligently with tears."

If we are to credit the testimony of this Scripture we must reject the opinion of Dr. Northrup's New Testament exegetes. According to this passage Esau's bartering away of his own birth-right for a mess of pottage was a profane act, involving the surrender of the Messianic promise and the heritage of blessing it was designed to convey; and from the use made of his act in doing so in this admonition to the Hebrews, it is manifest that his whole admonitory force depends upon the assumption that the blessing lost was a spiritual blessing.

Belfast, Ireland, April, 1893.

CHAPTER XIV.

DR. WATTS' REPLY.

THIRTEENTH PAPER.

To the Editor of the Western Recorder:

The view of the case of Esau given in the previous article is further justified and confirmed by what the Apostle says (Ephes. 2:12,13) about the former state of those gathered into the church from among the Gentiles. "Wherefore," he says, "remember, that aforetime, ye, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called Circumcision, in the flesh, made by hands; that ye were at that time separate from Christ." Mark the proof he gives of their being separate from, or without Christ. The proof is, that they "were aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world." It is true there was a difference between the case of Esau and the case of these Ephesian converts. The difference, however, is such as to show that, bad as their case was, his was still worse. They cannot be said to have bartered away, in a profane transaction, any divine birthright as he

did. Viewed in the light of Scripture, therefore, it is manifest that the loss incurred by Esau was a truly spiritual loss, and that what Jacob gained was a truly spiritual gain, and, therefore, we must conclude, that the two cases are adduced by the Apostle to illustrate the very doctrine of the sovereignty of God in predestination for which Calvinists contend, and which Dr. Northrup endeavors to eliminate from a chapter through which it runs, as a golden thread, from beginning to end. It is needless to refer in confirmation to the history of the descendants of these two men. Is it not a notorious fact, that all Paul says of the state and relations of the Ephesians, prior to their conversion, would apply equally to the descendants of Esau, both as regards their spiritual estate and their relation to the Commonwealth of Israel? They were not only aliens from that Commonwealth, but were its bitter foes. Dr. Northrup's New Testament authorities may be very learned men, but learning which leads men to conclusions which are not in harmony with inspired history, and which gainsay express apostolic testimony, is a dangerous guide.

So much for prefatory remark number 4. Let us now turn to the preceding remarks, 1, 2, 3, in which we have a truly Calvinistic account of the way of salvation, as actually applied to, and ex-

perienced, by men. Salvation involves the exercise of faith and repentance—repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ. Men exercise this faith and repentance because the Holy Spirit renews them—originates in them a holy disposition, which is the permanent basis of all holy exercises. This renewal God executes because of an eternal immutable purpose of grace.

This is sound doctrine, but, as already remarked, it furnishes a very unsuitable exordium to an argument whose object is the elimination of the doctrine of the sovereignty of God in predestination, not only from the ninth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, but from the whole New Testament. If the way of salvation, as actually applied and experienced, be such as is here described by Dr. Northrup, and it undoubtedly is, the doctrine of the sovereignty of God in predestination follows as a matter of logical necessity. This becomes manifest as soon as the question is raised, has God furnished to all men the conditions necessary to faith and repentance? Dr. Northrup alleges He has, for he asserts and contends, that the provisions of grace are universal, and are such as to endow every man with “plenary ability to strive to exercise the faith and repentance which the Bible requires,” when stirred into action by “the touch

of truth and of the Holy Spirit." As the reviewer examined this claim in his criticism of Dr. Northrup's original articles, it is unnecessary to dwell at length upon the utter absence of argument to support it, or to point out the fact, that neither in the Word of God, nor in secular history, is there one iota of proof that the indispensable conditions of faith and repentance have been furnished to the whole posterity of Adam. Attention was called to the term "truth" used by Dr. Northrup as a designation of one of the necessary provisions of grace, and the criticism was, that to be one of the conditions of faith and repentance, the "truth" must be the truth as it is in Jesus. It was also shown that apart from the agency of the Holy Spirit, even the truth as it was in Jesus could not avail to the generation of faith and repentance, but, on the contrary, must prove the savour of death unto death. Dr. Northrup had cited in support of the doctrine he was advocating—the doctrine of the universality of the provisions of grace—the testimony of our Lord regarding the readiness of the Father to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him, and on this the Criticism was: how can those ask Him who have never heard either of the Father or of the Holy Spirit?

Now this one fact, a fact patent on the face of the inspired page, and illustrated throughout

the history of the administration of the economy of grace, neutralizes and negatives this commentary on the Epistle to the Romans. What this commentary tries to eliminate from this epistle, and from the whole New Testament, is a doctrine which cannot be eliminated, except on the assumption that the provisions of grace are universal endowing "every man with *plenary ability* to strive to exercise the faith and repentance which the Bible requires," under the quickening touch of truth and of the Holy Spirit. As the necessary conditions—the conditions necessary to the exercise of these graces—have not been furnished to the whole race, and certainly not, as Dr. Northrup claims, to "every man" of the race, the question forces itself upon us, to what are we to refer the limitation? Limitation, a momentous limitation of the provisions of grace, exists and has existed throughout the history of mankind, to what are we to ascribe it? Are we to accept the solution proposed by Dr. Northrup, that the limitation was determined by something foreseen which distinguished those from whom the provisions of grace have been withheld, from those to whom they have been vouchsafed? or are we to ascribe the limitation as the Scriptures do, to the good pleasure of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will? In a word, the apparatus of an applied

redemption recognized by Dr. Northrup in his exordium, furnishes a complete refutation—a refutation based on the unquestionable fact of its limitation—not only of his commentary upon the ninth of Romans, but of his entire theory propounded in these remarkable articles on the sovereignty of God in predestination as contained in the system of strict Calvinism.

It is unnecessary to enter into detail, or to point out the instances in which the commentary sets aside the plain teaching of the Apostle in that marvellous epistle, and especially in the chapter of which it formally treats. There is, however, one omission which cannot be passed over. Is it not remarkable that one who undertakes a commentary on Romans should omit the fifth chapter? Perhaps his former reference to Adam's relation to his posterity, as a "legal fiction," determined him in this matter. A fair interpretation of that fifth chapter, in which the Apostle institutes both a comparison and a contrast between Adam and Him who was to come, of whom Adam was a figure, or type, establishes, beyond successful challenge, the divine sovereignty in Predestination. That sovereignty is revealed in the appointment of both these federal heads. It is revealed in the covenant of works into which God entered with our first father, and in the covenant into which He entered

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with His Son in the covenant of grace. It was in the exercise of His free, unfettered sovereignty, that He made the standing of Adam's posterity depend upon the conduct of Adam as their federal head, and, in like manner, it was in the exercise of that same sovereignty, He gave to His Son, in the eternal covenant of Redemption, a seed whose eternal destiny was made to depend upon His work as their Representative and Surety.

The commentator who would eliminate from this marvellous epistle, the doctrine of God's free, unconditioned sovereignty in predestination, has undertaken a hopeless task, a task on which the science of a truly genuine exegesis has stamped the word *impossible*.

Belfast, Ireland, May, 1893.

SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD.

PART III.

DR. NORTHRUP'S SECOND REJOINDER.

SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD.

DR. NORTHRUP'S SECOND REJOINDER.

PART III.

Dr. Watts' reply to our rejoinder is largely a repetition of matter contained in his first series of articles. It is also characterized by the same carelessness and inaccuracy of statement which rendered those articles untrustworthy as representing the views criticised. It will be proper to give in support of this statement a few illustrations which, however, might be indefinitely multiplied.

1. "Is it not remarkable," says the reviewer, "that one who undertakes a commentary on the Romans should omit the fifth chapter? Perhaps his former reference to *Adam's relation* to his posterity, as a 'legal fiction', determined him in this matter." But it was not *Adam's relation* to his posterity, but the *federal theory* of that relation, which we designated as a "legal fiction." The following is our statement: "But it seems that Dr. Watts firmly believes—in fact *knows*—that God would have acted in a manner infinitely

wise and glorious had He decreed the trial and fall of our first parents, the development of the successive generations of their posterity, the death in infancy of one half of their descendants, and the perdition, not only of all adults, but of all who die before reaching the age of responsible action,—the ground of this stupendous conclusion being the *legal fiction* known as the *federal theory* which has no advocate of note among living divines, American or European!" According to the theory which we called a "legal fiction" Adam stood for his posterity, his act of disobedience was imputed to them, and on the ground of this imputation they are condemned, and being condemned they are regarded as such and so treated as to become necessarily corrupt. All the acts in this extraordinary transaction, with the single exception of the sin of Adam, are *divine* acts. The appointment of Adam was a divine act, the imputation of his guilt was a divine act, the condemnation of his posterity was a divine act, and their consequent corruption is the necessary result of a divine act. Here we have guilt without sin, exposure to divine wrath without ill-desert,—God regarding and treating men as being not what they are, but what they are not, punishing them on the ground of a sin committed before they existed, visiting them with gratuitous condemnation, and gratuitous

reprobation, and, in case of non-elect infants dying in infancy, with gratuitous damnation! It would not be easy to imagine anything more obviously in conflict with the ethical character of God than this theory with its artificial distinctions—arbitrary representation, fictitious imputation, constructive guilt, limited atonement.

2. Another instance of Dr. Watts' carelessness and inaccuracy of statement is given in the following quotation: "Ethical perfection, if we are to accept this account of its very essence, consists of the combined virtues of holiness and love! The essence of ethical perfection, when ethical perfection exists in infinite perfection, is a perfection in which the attribute of *justice* finds no place! Perhaps Dr. Northrup has accepted Leibnitz' idea of justice that it is benevolence guided by wisdom. Such is the doctrine which is to solve the problem of the sovereignty of God in the conception and administration of the economy of redemption." Having made this statement he proceeds to show at length, "the consequences of eliminating the attribute of justice from the essence of the ethical perfection of God." Here it is suggested and then affirmed that we adopt the view that "justice is benevolence guided by wisdom." But there is nothing in our whole discussion which furnishes the least

ground for this charge. We hold firmly that justice is, not benevolence, but justice; it consists in rendering to every one that which is due him on grounds of good or ill desert; it is the holiness of God expressing itself towards moral beings according to their character—according to their moral likeness or unlikeness to Himself. As holy God loves the pure with a love of complacency and abhors the impure, and as *just* he expresses His love by bestowing blessings upon the former and His abhorrence by inflicting punishment upon the latter. The essence of all punishment, under the divine government, is the necessary reaction of the immanent and eternal holiness of God against wrong-doing and wrong-doers.

3. We pass to notice a third instance of the reviewer's culpable carelessness. We quote from his reply to our rejoinder: "The question, then, is forced upon us, how is it that, under the righteous administration of Jehovah, it (the work of Christ) has not, thus far, been made known to millions upon millions of fallen men, whereas the knowledge of it has been vouchsafed to others? The system of strict Calvinism answers with our Lord, under like circumstances—'Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight.' It resolves the problem into the mere good pleasure of God. Dr. Northrup is

not satisfied with this decision and comes forward with a solution which, it is presumed, he thinks solves the mystery." What is the proper characterization of this statement in which we are charged with not being satisfied with resolving the problem of the condition of the heathen world, or any other similar problem, "into the mere good pleasure of God," or as bringing forward a solution of these problems different from that given in the words of our Lord? It is, of course, needless to say to those who have read our articles that we strongly emphasize the biblical truth that "God is a sovereign and the highest of all, because He possesses the power and the right to govern and dispose of all His creatures according to His good pleasure, according to the dictates of His infinite intelligence, making Himself His own highest law and highest end."

4. We mention another of the reviewer's random statements the logical consequences of which are fearful to contemplate. He says: "To require at the hands of Christ such a work and make no provision for the announcement of it, *to all for whom it was wrought* (the italics are the reviewer's), were to violate the most sacred principles of the Divine administration;" and, again, "The work of Christ was such as to make it *morally impossible* not to make it known to *all*

for whom it was wrought." We have here positive statements which consign to perdition all infants dying in infancy—one-half the human race. As the atonement *must* be announced to *all for whom it was wrought*, and as it cannot be announced to infants, it follows that no atonement has been made for those who die in infancy, or for those who are afflicted with congenital imbecility, and, as "*original sin*," according to the strict Calvinistic theory, "*Doth, in its own nature, bring guilt upon the sinner, whereby he is bound over to the wrath of God and curse of the law, and so made subject to death with all its miseries, spiritual, temporal and eternal*," the immutable justice of God must require Him to visit these infants and idiots with His everlasting displeasure!

5. Dr. Watts is mistaken in his interpretation of the following statement which we quoted from Principal Cunningham, placing it beside the reviewer's fancy sketch: "The omniscient Jehovah dethroned and in his place blind, relentless Fate," etc.—"It is, we think, *unwarranted and presumptuous* to assert that even the *self-determining power of the will* would prevent Him in whom we live, move and have our being, who is everywhere and at all times present in the exercise of all His perfections, who searcheth the heart and trieth the reins of the children of

men, from superintending all its movements according to the counsel of His own will." Dr. Watts thinks there is a profound difference in meaning between the phrase of Cunningham, "*a* self-determining power of the will," and the phrase, as quoted by us, "*the* self-determining power of the will." But on the same page (*The Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation*, p.511), we have the following statement, identical in thought with the one quoted by us: "But it cannot be proved that either the certainty or the immutability of the event, or the agency of God in providence in regulating and controlling men's volitions, would be certainly precluded by *a* liberty of indifference, or *the* self-determining power of the will." It is certain that these three phrases, used on the same page, "*a* liberty of indifference," "*the* self-determining power of the will," "*a* self-determining power of the will," mean one and the same thing, viz.: the current Arminian notion of free will.

In the further discussion of the criticisms of Dr. Watts we shall restrict ourselves to the consideration of four questions:

I. Are the provisions of grace universal?

II. Do the views advanced by us imply that salvation is not of grace, but a debt?

III. Is there any difference between men to which, as eternally foreseen, God had respect in

determining upon whom to bestow, and from whom to withhold, renewing grace?

IV. What support do the Scripture testimonies adduced by the reviewer give to the several propositions which are of the essence of the theory of strict Calvinism?

I. The universality of the provisions of grace.

In one of our articles we used the following language: "Has man, every man, ability—*plenary ability*—under the universal provisions of grace, to avoid committing the unpardonable sin and to escape final damnation? *Full power*, for a period longer or shorter, moved by rational self-regard, a sense of duty, the natural principle of gratitude, and "aspiration for something better than he has, or than he is," in response to the quickening touch of truth and of the Holy Spirit, "to resist the evil tendencies of his nature," to strive to exercise the repentance and faith which the Bible requires, "with the certainty that his struggle will be blessed of God" with the blessing of regenerating and forgiving grace? Who is it that says, "If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?"

In saying that the provisions of grace are universal we mean that God's purpose of mercy

positively and sincerely extends to and includes all mankind; that the work of Christ was universal in scope and design, that it placed the whole world under a dispensation of grace, thereby rendering possible the salvation of all who reach the age of moral action, and rendering certain the salvation of a large part of this class, and of all who die in infancy. The idea here advanced of the universality of the provisions of grace Dr. Watts considers to be an error of exceptional enormity which he attempts to refute in the sixth paper in his reply. This paper he evidently regards as a masterpiece of reasoning and confesses that, at first, he was greatly astonished that we made no reference to it in our rejoinder. His astonishment, however, quickly disappeared upon re-reading the paper. He remarks: "In looking into that chapter again, the reviewer is not surprised that Dr. Northrup did not like to cultivate much acquaintance with it," inasmuch as it shows that "the claim" of the universality of the provisions of grace "bears the stamp of its own condemnation emblazoned on its own forehead." What is the position of the reviewer? It is that the provisions of grace are exceedingly restricted; that in the case of inconceivable millions of the race—all without exception who have no knowledge of the gospel—salvation is an absolute impossibility; by

nothing which they can purpose or do, by no possible measure of fidelity in living up to the light which they have, can they secure the bestowment of renewing grace, or avoid the sentence of final damnation.

1. Faith in Christ is absolutely essential to salvation, but faith in Christ implies a knowledge of Him as revealed in the gospel, of which the vast majority of the human race have been destitute.

2. Again, the Holy Spirit, the author of regeneration of which saving faith is the fruit, is bestowed only upon those who have a knowledge of Christian truth.

3. And, still further, the atonement is limited in its design; it was made for those and for those only to whom the way of life in the gospel is made known.

Hence the perdition of the vast majority of the adult population of the world is unavoidable—a matter of rigid necessity. For they are destitute of the knowledge without which faith is impossible; they are deprived of the gift of the Holy Spirit to whose exclusive agency regeneration is due, and they were excluded from the number of those for whom the atonement was made—a fact which, of itself, renders it as impossible for them, as it is for the apostate angels, to be saved through Christ. Such are

the steps of the argument of Dr. Watts in proof that the provisions of grace are not universal, that the everlasting destruction of the inconceivable millions of the race who have no knowledge of the historic Christ is not only certain, but *inevitable*, let them do what they can in seeking the favor of God. What reply could he make to the charge that he teaches the infinitely abhorrent dogma that God creates these multitudes of mankind in order to damn them? If it could be shown that *one single individual* in the course of the world's history had been made a member of the kingdom of God without a knowledge of Christ as revealed in the gospel, it would involve the total destruction of the argument which the reviewer regards as a masterpiece of reasoning, and the development of which, in several articles, constitutes a very considerable part of his whole discussion.

No truth of revelation is more certain than that the provisions of grace are universal. That the atonement is universal in its scope and design is made certain by the plainest declarations of the Bible. John iii. 16—"God so loved *the world* that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have eternal life;" I. John ii. 2—"Jesus Christ is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for (the sins of) *the whole*

world;" I. Tim. ii. 16—"Who gave himself a ransom for *all*;" Heb. ii. 9—"That He by the grace of God should taste death *for every man*;" II. Cor. v. 14—"For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge that if one died for *all*, then *all* died;" II. Cor. v. 19—"That God was in Christ, reconciling *the world* unto himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses."

And the same love which moved God to give His only begotten Son for all men, moves Him to seek the salvation of each and every one of them. Rom. xi. 9—"For God hath shut up *all* unto disobedience, that He might have mercy upon *all*;" I. Tim. ii. 4—"God, our Savior. *willeth* that *all* should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth;" II. Pet. iii. 9—"The Lord is long-suffering to you-ward, not *wishing* that any should perish, but that *all* should come to repentance." Since Jesus Christ is "the image of the invisible God" (Col. i. 15), the effulgence of His glory and the very image of His substance (Heb. i. 3), since He and the Father are one in nature and spirit (John xiv. 9) we must regard His words recorded in Luke xiii. 34; xix. 41, 42, as a most tender and pathetic expression of the compassion of God towards those whose wickedness was rapidly rising to its culmination.

These considerations—the universal design of the atonement, the numerous declarations of

Scripture that God loves all men in the sense of desiring to save each and every one of them, and the *Christly character of God*, render incredible the dogma of the *necessary* damnation of any man—not to speak of the *necessary damnation* of the vast majority of our race, all of whom were embraced from everlasting in the infinite heart of God, and for all of whom Christ wrought His redemptive work. And yet this is the dogma which Dr. Watts affirms on the ground of his understanding of a single passage of Scripture!

There is no evidence whatever “that the race is divided into two great sections, one of which is dealt with on the basis of the gospel and the other on the basis of law—one on a basis of justice, the other on a basis of grace.” The attitude of God towards the whole world is one and the same in all ages; it is an attitude of mercy, of grace, based on the work of Jesus Christ; it does not change in relation to individuals or races as they pass from the darkness of paganism into the light of the gospel, but is “without variableness or shadow of turning.” The purpose of redemption is the guiding principle in the mind of God in His government of individuals, of nations and of the world, as well before as since the coming of Christ. Before Christ came, but in view of his coming, God exercised patience and forbearance in dealing with man-

kind, allowing their sins to pass by without full punishment. (Rom. iii. 24.) Since the work of Christ was wrought for all mankind it is *certain* that it will secure to all whatever provisions are *essential* to salvation—light, the gift of the Holy Spirit, etc. Supernatural revelation is not *indispensable* to salvation, the light of nature is sufficient if men would use it aright. The whole universe is a divine revelation—it is ablaze with God. The worlds were made through Christ and through Christ they consist. Creation is replete with truths whose eternal home is the mind of the incarnate Son of God. Nature is full of saving agencies and is co-working with the church and the Holy Spirit to bring man to God, “In Him—in the pre-incarnate, immanent Word—was life and the life was the light of men;” “He was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” (John i. 4,9.) On this last expression Dr. Hovey remarks as follows (Commentary on John, p. 63): “We understand it as a description of the normal relation of the Word to the world of mankind, as an affirmation that if any one fails of true and saving knowledge, it is because he closes the eye of his soul to it, and not because the Word has failed to offer it to him.”

The words of Peter to Cornelius imply the possible salvation of the heathen: “Of a truth I

perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation, he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to Him." (Acts x. 34,35.) The goodness of God leads—its design and normal tendency is to lead—men to repentance (Rom. ii. 4), and the goodness of God is universal; God has never at any time left himself without a witness in this respect, doing good unto all men, giving them rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness. (Acts xiv. 17.) And in dealing with the people of all nations He has had their salvation in view, "determining the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation, that they should seek after the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him and find him, though He be not far from any one of us." (Acts xvii. 26,27.) If it were true that the knowledge of Christ is indispensable to salvation, it would not follow, as Dr. Watts teaches, that the perdition of the heathen world would be *necessary*; that we are to regard the atonement as not made for those to whom it is not, in fact, announced. We heartily endorse the strong language of Dr. Shedd (Sermons to the Natural Man, p. 114): "Should the pagan himself, actually obey the dictates of his own conscience, he would find the light that was in him growing still clearer and brighter. God himself, the author of his rational

mind, and the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world, would reward him for his obedience by granting him yet more knowledge. We cannot say in what particular mode the Divine providence would bring it about, but it is as certain as that God lives, that if the pagan world should act up to the degree of light which they enjoy, they would be conducted ultimately to the truth as it is in Jesus and would be saved by the Redeemer of the world."

The dogma of Dr. Watts that the Holy Spirit is granted only to those who have a knowledge of the truths of the gospel is without warrant of Scripture and is contrary to the judgment of the chief representatives of the strict Calvinistic school. Hodge, *Syst. Theol.*, II., 667—"The Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit, as the spirit of truth, of holiness, and of life in all its forms, is present with every human mind, enforcing truth, restraining from evil, exciting to good, and imparting wisdom or strength, when, where, and in what manner seemeth to Him good." Shedd, *Dogmatic Theol.*, I., 432—"Every human being experiences some degree of the ordinary influences of the Spirit of God. St. Paul teaches that God strives with man universally. He convicts him of sin and urges him to repent of it and forsake it."

The teaching of our Lord in Matt. xxv. 31-46,

in which he sets forth the programme of the judgment day justifies the view of the possible salvation of those who have no knowledge of Him as revealed in the gospel. "Come, ye blessed of my Father." "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me." Who are the brethren of Christ in this judgment programme? His disciples? Yes, but not these alone. For the event which He describes is that of the general judgment, where all nations, all the generations which shall have thronged the globe, shall stand before his judgment seat, among whom there will be countless millions who never saw or heard of His disciples. "The 'brethren' must receive as comprehensive a designation as is given to 'neighbor' in the parable of the Good Samaritan, and be made co-extensive with all in every land who need the offices of love. The brethren of the Son of Man are the poor, suffering, sorrow-laden sons of men, and the principle on which the judgment proceeds is that as men treat those they would have treated the Judge had they had the opportunity." (Bruce.) The teaching of this great passage is not inconsistent with the doctrine of salvation through faith, for these deeds of love and mercy are expressions of an *implicit* faith—a virtual acceptance of the historic Christ.

We will conclude the discussion of this point by giving the views of some Calvinistic writers of high standing in relation to the salvation of the heathen, all of whom Dr. Watts consigns to hell.

Dr. Hovey (*Biblical Eschatology*, 172, 173):
“We have no right to deny that the sacrifice of Christ will avail for the salvation of many who do not know Him as Jesus of Nazareth. The words of Peter to Cornelius, ‘Of a truth, I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation, he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is acceptable to him’ (Acts x. 34,35), suggest a very different conclusion. Wherever the essentials of a Christian spirit are found there must be a person saved by grace. Read the list of ancient worthies in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews. How many of them knew anything of Jesus Christ as he lived and died in Palestine? It is absurd to call in question the new birth of such men as are named in that list, and equally absurd to assume that the Holy Spirit revealed to them the historic Christ, in order thereby to renew their hearts. But if Abraham and Melchisedeck, if Joseph and Moses, if Rahab and Cornelius, if a great number of the chosen people of God in every age, have been penitent for sin and accepted by the Father of mercies, through the atonement yet to be made,

or an atonement already made without their knowledge, surely no one can deny the possibility of salvation to the heathen who know not the name of Jesus."

"Christ," says Dr. Strong, "is the Word of God and the truth of God; He may, therefore, be received, even by those who have not heard of His manifestation in the flesh. We may hope that many shall come from the east and the west and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. A penitent and humble reliance upon God as a Savior from sin and a guide of conduct is an implicit faith in Christ, for such reliance casts itself upon God so far as God has revealed Himself (Philosophy and Religion, p. 177).

Says Dr. Shedd: "It does not follow, however, that because God is not obliged to offer pardon to the unevangelized heathen, either here or hereafter, therefore no unevangelized heathen are pardoned. The electing mercy of God may reach to the heathen" * * * "That some unevangelized men are saved in the present life by an extraordinary exercise of redeeming grace in Christ has been the hope and belief of Christendom. * * * 'The habit of faith' involves penitence for sin, and the longing for its forgiveness and removal. 'The habit of faith' is the broken and contrite heart, which express-

es itself in the prayer, 'God be merciful to me a sinner!' It is certain that the Holy Spirit can produce, if He please, such a disposition and frame of mind, without employing, as He commonly does, the written word." (Doctrine of Endless Punishment, pp. 109, 110.)

Dr. Briggs, Whither, p. 221—"If the divine grace may be applied to the millions of infants dying in infancy, why not also to millions of adult heathen?"

II. Salvation of grace, not a debt. In his first series of papers Dr. Watts urged against our views an objection which, if valid, would be fatal, viz.: That we deny the fundamental doctrine of the gospel that salvation is of grace, and not a debt. And in his reply to our rejoinder he repeats the charge and attempts to justify it in an article which fills nearly five columns of *The Western Recorder*. The chief, if not exclusive, ground for this charge is contained in the following paragraph of our first article: "But we would inquire what warrant there is in reason or revelation for the view here presented by Dr. Candlish, and which rigid Calvinism necessarily implies, that it was morally possible for God to purpose to create our first parents, to permit the fall and the development of the successive generations of their posterity, and to make no provision for their salvation? The hypothesis is to

our mind an impossible one, and the discussion of it as empty and vain as it would be to seek to determine what degree of swiftness would enable the greyhound to outrun his shadow. As we have said above, all that is known, all that there is any warrant for affirming, is, that the plan of the universe which God adopted because most worthy of Himself, included, as eternal and essential elements, the creation of man, the permission or non-prevention of the fall, and redemption through Jesus Christ. That the plan would have been equally perfect, or that it would have been worthy of comparison with the existing plan, the element of redemption being left out—is what no man knows or can know, and what therefore no man has a right to affirm. This position does not imply that, as regards the rights and claims of men, God was under obligation to provide salvation, but only that the present plan, embracing the certainty of the fall and the purpose of redemption, is the most congruous with His nature, expressing most perfectly His infinite perfections.”

Upon this paragraph the reviewer remarks: “If this be not an express and explicit denial of the Scripture doctrine that salvation is of grace, it is certainly difficult to imagine what else the writer means. To assert that there is no warrant in reason or revelation for the view that it

was *morally possible* for God to purpose the creation, fall and development of the human race, and make no provision for their salvation, is simply another way of saying that salvation is not of grace. What it is *morally impossible* for God to do he cannot do, and if it was *morally impossible* for him to create man and to permit him to fall without making provision for his salvation, then he was under obligation—the highest obligation under which a moral being could be placed—to make that provision. To allege that a provision made in pursuance of a moral obligation is of grace and not a debt is just to say and unsay the same thing in the same sentence.”

But these assertions, one and all, are baseless, having no justification in the representation upon which they claim to rest; they are due (1) to a misconception of the nature of the freedom of God in relation to creation; (2) to the failure to discriminate between the obligation under which God placed Himself to execute the plan which He adopted and His freedom in the adoption of that plan; and (3) to the assumption that “obligation” on the part of God, and “rights” and “claims” on the part of men are “morally inseparable.”

1. We assume as an axiom that God is a Being of absolute ethical perfection.

2. In adopting the existing plan, embracing

the universe in its whole extent and everlasting duration, God was necessarily determined by the behests of His absolute ethical perfection. To quote our language in a former article: "In creating moral beings and governing them, in the bestowment of happiness and the infliction of punishment, in all His acts on earth, in heaven, and in hell, the law and end of God's action is one and the same—it knows no variableness, neither shadow of turning—it is to meet the requirements of His absolute moral worthiness. He has no attribute, no will, no sovereignty, above this law of His being."

3. It is an assumption for which there is no evidence accessible to the human mind that there were other plans precisely equal to the one adopted in point of excellency as an expression in the mind and heart of God, or that He ever has purposed, or that He ever will, or can, purpose an act, the opposite of which, viewed in all its relations and bearings, would be equally wise and excellent, equally befitting himself as infinitely benevolent and absolutely holy. Says Principal Fairbairn (*The Place of Christ in Modern Thought*, p. 446): "God wills as he was. The idea of the election of one from among an infinite multitude of possible worlds is a *philosophical myth*; the only possible world was the one realized. The divine will is not contin-

gent, or arbitrary, because it is free; the free action is spontaneous, an action into which the whole nature as a whole, as it were, involuntarily and harmoniously blossoms. God might or might not have acted; but if He did act, the way he took was the only way possible to Him." This is the only worthy or tenable view of God. He is the eternal home and source of law. The universe is a realm of universal and immutable laws, physical, rational and spiritual, because it is an expression of Him Whose will is guided by the principles of absolute perfection. What Principal Fairbairn calls a "philosophical myth" has played a very conspicuous, but very mischievous part in theological speculation, implying action on the part of the Divine Being which cannot be vindicated from the charge of arbitrariness and caprice.

4. Since God is a Being of absolute perfection it is self-evident that the fullest and most perfect revelation of Himself must include a manifestation of His love as well as His justice, of His wisdom as well as of His power. Possessing infinite perfections it would not be optional for Him to limit His external action to the creation of a universe of inanimate and irrational things; it was not optional because it was infinitely more befitting and worthy of Himself as God to create a universe of personal agents over whom He

could reign by love rather than by force, whom He could bring into conscious fellowship with Himself, and to whom He could impart, in a measure, of His own purity and blessedness. It is the belief of all schools of theologians, based on the uniform representation of Scripture, that the work of redemption infinitely enhances the glory of God's self-revelation.

5. If then the plan of the universe, including, as essential elements, the creation of man, the permission or non-prevention of the fall, and redemption through Jesus Christ, was most congruous with the nature of God, meeting most fully the requirements of His whole ethical personality, it was morally impossible for Him to adopt this plan—the element of redemption being left out—in which case there would have been, in His dealing with the race, no manifestation of mercy and compassion, but only that of righteous wrath, of retributive justice. As we have remarked, “That the plan adopted was infinitely worthy of God we *know* from the fact of its adoption, but that there was any other plan equally excellent, or even worthy of comparison with it as an expression of the mind and heart of God, is what no man knows or can know, and what, therefore, no man has a right to affirm.” God is not free to deny Himself. Freedom of will in Him does not imply the moral power of a

contrary choice. In Him the highest freedom and the highest necessity are identical. The freedom of the divine will is the freedom of perfect wisdom to act most wisely, of infinite benevolence to act most benevolently, of absolute holiness to act most holily. A higher freedom than such moral necessity is inconceivable and impossible. It is not to speak unworthily, but worthily of God to say, that, since the quality of mercy and compassion is as deep in His nature as that of justice, it is *morally impossible for Him to act as if justice were the sole ethical quality of His being*. The representation here made touching the moral necessity of the divine action in relation to the plan of creation does not furnish the least ground for the charge that we teach that salvation is not of grace, but a debt. On the contrary, our view emphasizes and glorifies the grace of God. *The act of God adopting the plan involving his own incarnation and redemptive work in Jesus Christ was itself the fundamental act of grace, involving all His manifestations of love, mercy, compassion, from the beginning to the end of the world's history.* It is impossible to have a higher conception of divine grace than that which arises from regarding God as a Being so great in love and compassion that He was constrained to choose, in preference to all others, a plan which involved an infinite sacrifice—the

sacrifice of Himself in Jesus Christ—in order to deliver men from sin and guilt. How strange that any one should imagine that to say that God could not satisfy the promptings of His infinitely benevolent heart, except in the way of the incarnation and the cross, is to affirm that salvation is not of grace, but a debt, that man can claim the divine favor on the ground of right and justice!

The assumption of Dr. Watts that “obligation” on the part of God and “rights” and “claims” on the part of men, “are morally inseparable,” is not of universal validity. In case man had remained holy we must suppose that he would have had the right to claim to be regarded and treated as holy, and that God would have been under obligation to regard and treat him as such; or if men believe on Jesus Christ it may be said that they have a right to the rewards promised, and that God is bound to bring them to the felicity of the heavenly world. But the assumption has no basis in relation to the case which is before us in this discussion. Let us illustrate our position, comparing divine things with human,—which is the only way we can understand them. Would the feeling of a rich creditor that it would be the most excellent and honorable thing on his part, and, therefore, obligatory, to cancel a debtor’s debt, give the latter a *right*

to claim, on grounds of equity, release from his obligation? Suppose a father—a man of highest excellence, profoundly benevolent and conscientious—should feel bound to do all in his power to regain the confidence and affection of his children who had become alienated from him; that he should regard the course suggested of such excellence that he could not but purpose to pursue it, to use his vast wealth, and to make all sacrifices, even that of life itself, to bring his alienated children into right relations to himself, thereby securing to them the highest good in his power to bestow. Would “obligation” on the part of the father, and “rights” and “claims” on the part of the children, be, in this case, “morally inseparable?” Would the fact that his love and compassion was so great that, not to labor and make the greatest possible sacrifices for his children’s good, would do violence to his nature, give them a *right* to demand these labors and sacrifices in their behalf? It is self-evident that this question admits of but one answer; that the feeling of obligation on the part of the father would afford no ground whatever for any claim, in equity, to his favor on the part of the children.

The application of these illustrations is obvious. We cannot make it more clear than by re-stating the positions already indicated. It is *morally*

impossible for God to act otherwise than in a manner most befitting Himself as God. His absolute ethical perfection is the law of His will, determining the final end of creation, the orders of personal agents to be created, the methods of their probationary discipline—determining the whole plan of the universe in its limitless extent and everlasting duration. Whatever manifestations of His infinite perfections—of His power, wisdom, compassion, justice—are most worthy of Himself, it behooves Him to make, and in this law we find that which underlies and shapes His eternal plan. And since the plan most befitting Himself—involving the most glorious manifestation of His attributes—included, as essential elements, the creation of man, the certainty of the fall, and redemption through Jesus Christ, it was *morally impossible* for Him not to adopt this plan in preference to one which should include the creation of man, and the certainty of the fall, but no redemptive provisions. Is it not self-evident that the view that God is a Being so great in love that he *cannot but express it* in redemptive acts, implies no *right* on the part of man to claim salvation as a debt?

III. As to the difference between men to which God has respect in choosing one man rather than another. In our second article we said: “There is but one supposable way by which the divine

decisions in the matter of election and non-election can be vindicated against the charge of pure arbitrariness, *viz.*: the acceptance of the position that there is *some difference* or *differences* between men to which God has respect which are, if not 'moving causes,' yet 'conditions,' of his decisions. As there are, in fact, differences among men, it is as certain that he takes these differences into account in determining the diverse destinies of men in the future world as that he does so in determining their diverse conditions and careers in this world." The truth of this position seems to us as certain as any principle of mathematics. Self-evidently the alternatives are: pure arbitrariness on the part of God, or *some difference* to which he has respect in determining the diverse destinies of men. How should we characterize the act of a man, who, having before him twelve marble balls between which he knew there was *no difference*, should select six and reject six? Should we not say that his action was arbitrary and capricious—there being *no reason* whatever for his decision in selecting or rejecting one ball rather than another? This illustration is, according to the current theory, strictly applicable to the divine procedure in predestination. The fact that God is a Being of infinite intelligence is wholly immaterial as respects the point in hand; for infin-

ite intelligence no more than finite intelligence can rationally and wisely discriminate between objects which are known to be identical. As then it is *impossible* for God to act in the way suggested by this illustration, there *must be* some difference between men in view of which He acts in determining their diverse destinies—some difference in their physical, mental, or moral condition, in their adaptation to usefulness, in their capacity to illustrate the divine perfections, etc.

In criticising this position Dr. Watts writes as follows: "Will any intelligent man accept this as a solution of the mystery of the divine choice? Does not the question force itself upon us and demand an answer how came it to pass that the one chosen happened to possess those qualities which distinguished him from the one passed by and supplied the requisite 'reason,' 'condition,' etc., for his selection? The basal distinction cannot be regarded as moral, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, and Dr. Northrup admits that the foreseen something is not something meritorious. The ground of the divine action, therefore, must be something in the mental constitution of the subjects of the divine choice which determines the divine purpose in their case. This brings us to the root of the whole controversy on the line laid down by Dr. Northrup. As both classes—those elected

and those rejected—received their whole being from God—their whole being whether mental or physical—does it not follow, that the foreseen quality in which Dr. Northrup finds the ‘reason,’ or ‘condition,’ of the divine decree, is a ‘condition’ furnished by God Himself in their creation?”

1. But the view advanced by us is not open to the charge that any difference between men to which God has respect in dealing with them must be referred to His creative agency. Mankind are placed under a system of gracious probation based on the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. Legal probation—probation under law—which was that of holy Adam and of angels—differs from gracious probation in three fundamental respects. The former (1) requires perfect obedience as the condition of eternal life; (2) implies plenary ability to fulfill this condition; (3) is terminated by the first act of disobedience. The latter (1) requires, as the condition of eternal life, not perfect obedience, but repentance and faith; (2) implies plenary ability to secure from God the grace necessary to compliance with this condition; (3) continues, notwithstanding persistence in impenitence, through years and decades of years.

Dr. Watts repudiates the idea of a gracious probation, holding that the only probation of

therace is that which it had in Adam, and that the fundamental purpose of God in relation to mankind is that of predestination in its two forms of election and reprobation—decrees which are formed irrespective of the foresight of the personal action of those included in them. He urges against the view of a gracious probation two objections which he regards as “serious and conclusive”—objections which are, however, of no weight as brought against the true idea of the system of gracious probation as stated above. We cannot go into a full discussion of this subject—a paragraph or two must suffice. The uniform representation of the Bible—made often in language the most urgent, solemn, and pathetic—implies a state of probation—the ability on the part of man to determine his eternal destiny. The incarnate Son of God, as He looked upon the doomed city of His native land, uttered in five words, “I would, ye would not,” the fundamental truth which is expressed or implied on every page of the inspired Record. Probation necessarily implies a measure of freedom. Without a degree of freedom there can be no responsibility. The two are inseparable. The Westminster Standards make nothing of free will except to affirm that it was lost in the fall. “Man, by his fall into a state of sin, *hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good ac-*

companying salvation." The statement is an exaggeration. Man though fallen possesses a measure of liberty, a remainder of freedom, by virtue of which he is *fully able—naturally and morally able*—not to renew himself, but so to use common grace and the means of common grace as to render the bestowment of renewing grace *certain*. The good faith of God in commanding and entreating all men to shun destruction and to accept of offered mercy self-evidently implies the *possibility* of compliance with the terms of salvation; God cannot tantalize creatures with the offer of an infinite good which it is *impossible* for them to secure. The Scriptures clearly teach that God will bestow saving grace upon men if they will seek it with the light and strength which he gives, or is willing to give. "Thou, Lord, art plenteous in mercy unto all that call upon Thee," Ps. lxxxvi. 5; "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved," Rom. x. 13; "If ye then being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him," Luke xi. 14; "Ask and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you," Matt. vii. 7; "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest," Matt. xiii. 28; "Seek ye the Lord while He_v may be

found, call ye upon Him while He is near," Isa. lv. 6. Is it *certain* that the request of a sick child, made to a most wise, tender, and loving father, will be granted in case he is fully persuaded that the favor asked is essential to the child's highest good, and is it only *possible*, or *probable*, but not *certain* that our heavenly Father, Who is infinitely wise, tender and loving, will grant the petition of those who supplicate Him, with the measure of liberty which they possess, for the grace which is essential to their eternal welfare? Is it *certain*, or only *probable*, that those who call upon the Lord shall be saved, that those who ask shall receive, and those who seek shall find? Is it said that these promises are made, not to the unregenerate, but to the regenerate? We reply that the language, in numerous passages, excludes the restriction suggested.

What then is the difference between men to which we refer—which God takes into account in determining to bestow or to withhold saving grace? Not a difference in their "mental or physical condition," "furnished by God Himself in their creation;" not a difference in merit, for of merit there can be no question in the case of any man; but a difference in the use of the freedom which they actually possess, in yielding or refusing to yield to the influence of the provi-

dence, truth and spirit of God, moving them to seek from Him the grace necessary to enable them to comply with the conditions of salvation. God requires men to exercise repentance and faith, not in their own strength, but in the strength which they can obtain from him. "Men are responsible not only for what they can do themselves, but for all they can secure from God" (Dr.Strong). Says Principal Cunningham: "Another statement of Augustine's, which Calvin repeatedly quotes with approbation, and which was applied by them, both to renewed and unrenewed men, is, '*Jubet Deus quae non possumus ut noverimus quid ab ipso petere debemus*'—God requires of us what we cannot perform, in order that we may know what we ought to ask from him." (The Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation, p. 487.) These "unregenerate doings," so-called, are not "good works" in the scriptural sense of these words, they are not repentance and faith, nor are they a substitute for these exercises of the new life; they have no merit and involve no claim, in equity, to the favor of God. They are simply efforts to do His will which render it consistent for Him as a wise and holy governor to bestow his pardoning grace.

Whatever the difficulty which burdens the view here presented burdens equally the Cal-

vinistic theory. We will attempt, in a few words, to justify this statement. According to the Calvinistic theory, though the purpose of election is formed irrespective of the action of those elected, the execution of this purpose in regeneration is generally, if not universally, immediately preceded by certain acts, feelings, convictions,—serious attention to divine truth, a sense of sin and guilt, fear of retribution, desire to be saved, etc.—in relation to which the sinner has a direct and responsible agency. We suppose every Calvinist would endorse the statement of President Davies: “It is only in the use of the means of grace that the sinner can expect divine grace to work faith in him; never yet was it produced in one soul while lying supine, lazy, inactive.” We may then confidently affirm that certain acts, feelings, states of mind—not necessarily the same in the case of all, or even of any two individuals—are immediate antecedents of the exercise of God’s renewing grace in the case of those who have reached the period of moral responsibility. Since this is God’s *uniform* method of procedure we must regard it as most wise and congruous with His nature, and, therefore, morally necessary on His part in order to the execution of the purpose of election in the work of renewal.

According to the view which we present the

fundamental purpose of God in relation to mankind was to put them under a system of gracious probation based on the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, and, as a method most worthy of Himself, to bestow, or to withhold, special and renewing grace, according to His eternal foreknowledge of the use that would be made of common grace and the means of common grace. This conception requires us to regard the action of men in seeking salvation—the so-called, “immediate antecedents of regeneration”—as necessary in order to render morally possible, on the part of God, *not the execution of the purpose of election, but the formation of that purpose itself.*

Granting, then, that the efforts of men to obtain eternal life, to exercise repentance and faith, in response to the gracious action of the Holy Spirit, are not only destitute of merit but sinful; still, according to either view before us, they are facts without which it would not be wise or befitting God to bring the sinner from death to life. Which now, we ask, is the more satisfactory explanation of the necessity of the so-called “antecedents of regeneration?”

1. Did God form the purpose of election in view of reasons wholly in Himself, but, acting under some moral behest, condition its execution in regeneration upon the existence of certain actions which are not only not meritorious,

but sinful? 2. Or did He purpose, in view of reasons wholly in Himself, to put mankind under a system of gracious probation, but, acting from the same moral behest, to bestow renewing grace upon those and those only in whom He eternally foresaw the *same actions of the sinner*, which, though not only without merit but sinful, are due to his seeking salvation, in response to the invitations of the gospel and the gracious work of the Holy Spirit? We submit that the difficulty, whatever it may be, which arises from the view that God in predestination has respect to the action of man rests with equal weight upon the Calvinistic theory.

[It seems to some incredible that unregenerate men can do anything which can be a reason or "condition" of the action of God in the bestowment of salvation; they are, it is urged, under the wrath of God, all their acts—even their most earnest prayers for divine mercy—are selfish, ungodly, etc. While it is true unrenewed men are the objects of the holy displeasure of God, it is also true, that they are the objects of His infinite love, the very love which moved Him to give His only begotten Son, and which moved the Son to humble Himself and become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Do the Scriptures teach that prayers must be morally perfect, sinless, in order to reach the ear and

heart of the Father of mercies? The prayers of believers are not free from moral defect; are none of them heard? Dr. Archibald Alexander wrote some years before his death,—“I am deeply convinced that I might justly be condemned for the most fervent prayer I ever offered.”] Were none of his prayers answered? The prayer of the regenerate man and the prayer of the convicted sinner for mercy are alike in the following particulars, (1) they are prompted by the Holy Spirit; (2) are the free expression of the will; (3) possess no merit; (4) are not free from moral fault; (5) put God under no obligation except in the sense that they furnish a reason or condition in view of which He has promised to act graciously. Is it said that the believer is in Christ, and that his prayers are heard for Christ’s sake? And is not the convicted sinner in Christ,—in his heart of love, in his purpose of grace, embraced in the scope of his redemptive work, and *are not his prayers answered for Christ’s sake?* Does he not believe “that God is and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him?” (Heb. xi. 6.) Says Dr. Shedd (Sermons to the Natural Man, p. 414): “Whoever *asks in prayer* for any of the benefits of Christ’s redemption, in so far exercises faith in this redemption. Whoever, for example, lifts up the supplication, ‘O, Lamb of God Who

taketh away the sins of the world, grant me Thy peace', in this prayer puts faith in the atonement. He trusts in the atonement by *pleading* the atonement. * * * In like manner he who asks for the renewing and sanctifying influences of the Holy Ghost, exercises faith in these influences. This is the mode in which he expresses his confidence in the power of God to accomplish a work in his heart that is beyond his own power."

Do the Scriptures teach that the purposes of God in predestination, are, in the logical order, antecedent to, and irrespective of, the moral action of men as foreseen? In proof that such is the nature of the purpose of election the following and other similar passages are appealed to: Rom. viii. 28-30; ix. 11,15,16,18,21; Acts xiii. 48; Eph. i. 4,5,9,11,18; 2 Tim. i. 9; James i. 18; Phil. iii. 14; Matt. xxii. 1-14; John xv. 16. It is impossible for us, in this reply, to enter with any fullness into the exegesis of these passages, but we express our confident belief, after careful examination, that they do not justify the view which they are adduced to support. We have examined at some length the passages referred to in Rom. ix. In Rom. viii. 29, 30, it is declared that God glorified whom He justified, and justified whom He called, and called whom He predestinated, and predestinated whom He

foreknew. Of these five acts the first only in the order of the divine procedure is of special importance as regards this discussion,—the act of foreknowledge which is not to be confounded with that of predestination, for it is the logical ground of predestination. What is meant by “foreknow?”—elected beforehand, or foreknew as certain to believe? Meyer, Commentary on Rom. viii. 28, 29—“The meaning of foreknowledge is not to be decided by dogmatic presuppositions, but simply by the usage of the language, in accordance with which it never in the New Testament means anything else than *to know beforehand*.” Godet—“There is but one answer: foreknown as certain to fulfil the condition of salvation, viz., *faith*.” But since faith is a fruit of renewal, and renewal is the exclusive work of God, the foreknowledge of faith presupposes the purpose of election which involves the new birth. According to the view which we advance God’s foreknowledge is His eternal foresight of those who would so use common grace and the means of common grace as to fulfil the condition which, under the system of gracious probation, rendered it wise and proper for Him to include them in the purpose of election.

Acts xiii. 48—“As many as were ordained unto eternal life believed.” Alford remarks: “That to find in this passage predestination to life as-

serted is to force both the word and the context to a meaning which they do not contain." If, however, the passage should be understood as teaching that the reason why some believe is their fore-ordination to eternal life, it would give no certain support to the theory under examination. Men believe because they are renewed, and they are renewed because they are foreordained to eternal life. But it is not said that in foreordaining these persons unto eternal life God acted irrespective of their personal action as foreseen. We cannot, however, examine these passages further in detail, but will add two or three general remarks. The theory that the purpose of election is irrespective of the moral action of man is not established:

(1) By those passages which teach that God is the Author of regeneration. (Rom. viii. 28,29; James i. 18; I. Pet. i. 3; I. Cor. i. 24.) The fact that God is the author of regeneration, and that he renews men according to His purpose, determines nothing as to the reasons or conditions in view of which His purpose was formed.

(2) By those passages which teach that He chose or foreordained men "according to the good pleasure of His will," "after the counsel of His own will," "because it seemed good in His sight," etc. (Eph. i. 5,11; Matt. xi. 26.) In our judgment the doctrine taught in this language,

is simply that, in choosing men God acts according to the dictates of His own intelligence, in view of reasons congruous with His nature—infinately worthy of Himself as God. If it had seemed a wise and fitting procedure on His part to determine to give men the requisite ability, and to choose them on condition of repentance and faith as foreseen, or in view of their seeking salvation from Him with the measure of freedom which they possessed, it could have been said that He acted “according to His good pleasure,” “after the counsel of His own will.” There is no evidence that these phrases teach that, “In making the selection of some men and in resolving to save them, God was not influenced by anything existing in them or foreseen in them, by which they were distinguished from other men; that there is *no difference* in men to which He had respect in choosing one man rather than another.”

(3) By those passages which teach that the “calling of God is not according to our works” (II. Tim. i. 9); that salvation is of grace, not of works (Eph. ii. 8,9); that “it is not of Him that willeth, nor of Him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy” (Rom. ix. 16). When the apostle speaks of “works” as inconsistent with grace he means by “works,” not mere human action, but such action regarded, according to the cur-

rent Jewish error, as *meritorious*, as furnishing a valid claim to the favor of God, according to the principle, "To him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt." But the view that God, in choosing men has respect to their moral action, does not imply that such action is *meritorious*, that the prayer, "God be merciful to me, a sinner," "Lord, I believe, help Thou my unbelief," detracts from the graciousness of the divine act of renewal and pardon.

2. Dr. Watts urges still further against our view that, "It reverses the relation of the divine foreknowledge to the divine decrees," thus virtually "dethroning Jehovah," "reducing Him to the position of a spectator whose line of action is determined by the creatures of His hand," requiring the believer, in answer to the question, Who made thee to differ? to say, "I myself did."

Calvinists assert that the decrees of God precede His foreknowledge of the free acts of personal agents; the Arminians reverse the order. Neither position is correct. The purpose and foreknowledge of God are mutually conditioning factors of His whole course of dealing with moral agents. If God is determined, in His dealings with free beings by their action, it is because, in the exercise of His sovereign pleasure, *He willed to be so determined*. "Sovereignty implies the

power of self-limitation, and this is necessary to leave room for the free action of the creature." (Schaff.) Says Dr. Bruce (Apologetics, p. 69): "It involves no injury to the sovereignty of God to ascribe to man the power of resisting His will. God freely imposed on Himself the limitation arising out of the existence of human wills, that he might have a realm in which He could reign by love and not by mere omnipotent force, as in the animate and inanimate spheres of being." The purpose to inflict punishment upon the angels who fell was determined or conditioned by their fall as eternally foreseen. The purpose of redemption—fundamentally related to the whole creation—was dependent or conditioned on the free, contingent act of Adam. There is nothing in this view to suggest the idea that it virtually "dethrones Jehovah, reducing Him to the position of a mere spectator," etc. It does not imply that His dealings with personal agents are determined by their action in any sense inconsistent with His absolute sovereignty. If they remain holy He deals with them in a manner honorable and glorious, by advancing them to the summit of finite honor and blessedness in everlasting fellowship with Himself; but if they sin He deals with them in a manner equally honorable and glorious by banishing them from His presence and visiting them with the retribution which they deserve.

It is not in the power of creatures to defeat or disturb God's sovereign purpose to govern the universe according to the requirements of His absolute ethical perfection. The adoption of the existing plan rendered it *certain* that all things would take place precisely as they do take place. The acts of God put forth in accordance with His purpose were eternally certain, and equally certain to His mind were the free acts of moral agents in all the conditions in which he willed to place them. And *certainty*, whatever be the ground of it, is the most sure and rational basis of action conceivable, whether for man or God. Whoever undertakes to find a more solid ground for action than this enters upon a search which is necessarily and self-evidently fruitless.

The view here presented which regards God as conditioning His action in purposing to bestow or to withhold saving grace on the action of men as foreseen, accords with His method of procedure in every sphere—physical, intellectual and spiritual. Man cannot cause a blade of grass to grow, but he can fulfill certain conditions and thereby secure, under the action of the will of God in the laws of nature, an abundant harvest. He cannot, by direct act of will, impart to his mind, one iota of power or knowledge, but he can fulfill conditions in virtue of which he

can obtain, under the action of the will of God in the laws of his intelligence, mental power and amplitude of knowledge. The Christian cannot advance himself in the divine life—purifying his heart, clarifying his vision of divine things, producing the peace of God which passeth knowledge—but he can use the grace which he possesses, with such fidelity, as to secure, through the operation of the Holy Spirit, all spiritual blessings. The people of God cannot convert a heathen, but they can so use the gifts of His providence and grace, as to render certain the triumph of His kingdom in all pagan lands. Who is it that says, ‘Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, and prove me now herewith, if I will not open to you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it?’

The same principle is illustrated in the miracles of healing recorded in the Bible, e.g., the case of Naaman, of the ten lepers who came to Christ, of the man with a withered hand, etc. All or nearly all of these miracles were wrought on condition of some act performed by those to be benefited. The case of Naaman will represent the whole class. In obedience to the divine command he washed in the Jordan and was healed. Would he have said, in answer to the question, Who made thee to differ from other

lepers? "I myself did?" No amount of washing in the Jordan would have cured him of his fatal disease, and his act of obedience, though the essential condition of God's interposition in his behalf, did not detract one iota from the miraculousness and graciousness of that interposition. Let us apply the principle of this illustration to the subject in hand: Suppose it had seemed good to God to require that men should use the measure of liberty which they possess, in seeking from Him saving grace, as the indispensable condition of its bestowment; would the fact that a man was renewed upon the fulfillment of this condition, enable him to say, in truth, in answer to the question, Who made thee to differ from unregenerate men? "I myself did?" No degree of earnestness and fidelity in seeking salvation, in the way appointed, would have brought him from death to life—opening his blind eyes, emancipating his enslaved will, and awakening in his heart supreme love to God. Salvation—in its beginning, progress and consummation—is wholly of God and wholly of grace. It was of grace that He determined to provide an atonement, of grace that He fixed the conditions of participation in its benefits, of grace that He induces compliance with those conditions, of grace that He accomplishes the work of renewal and

sanctification, of grace that He bestows the awards of the heavenly world.

IV. Examination of the Scripture testimony adduced by Dr. Watts in support of the system of strict Calvinism. In closing his review Dr. Watts calls attention to what he designates a "grave defect" in our discussion, viz., its "unscientific method." He says: "Instead of examining the evidence on which Calvinists rely in support of their system, he simply collects together a number of objections and arraying them before his readers asks them for their verdict. This method of procedure is as unscientific as it is unfair." It may be proper to say that, in our rejoinder, after indicating the chief difficulties in the theory of strict Calvinism as set forth in our articles, we remarked, that it was our design in a second series of articles to examine the alleged biblical support of the Calvinistic doctrine of God's sovereignty in predestination, and to give our views on the questions involved in the controversy. It is wholly immaterial, from a logical point of view, whether one considers the objections to a system of thought, and then examines, the grounds on which it is alleged to rest, or proceeds in the reverse order.

We propose to notice briefly the outline of Scripture testimony which Dr. Watts indicates in justification of the strict Calvinistic theory.

In order to judge of his success at this point—of the relevancy and weight of his Scripture testimonies—we need to have distinctly before our minds the propositions which are of the essence of the theory under consideration. Of these propositions which have been discussed at length we will mention four:

1. The sovereignty of God is a prerogative in the exercise of which He is absolutely free to will the exact opposite of that which He does will, in relation to the eternal destiny of every member of the race; able to bring all mankind to the everlasting felicity of heaven, or to consign all mankind to the everlasting misery of hell, “without prejudice to the glory of any of His attributes.”

2. There is *no difference* of any kind between men to which God has respect in determining upon whom to bestow, and from whom to withhold renewing grace, so that His decisions, in this matter of transcendent importance, are as arbitrary as they would be if He should determine by lot the eternal life or the eternal death of each and every man.

3. The decrees of election and reprobation (preterition, non-election) are, in the logical order, antecedent to, and irrespective of, all personal action as foreseen—having sole reference to pre-natal depravity and guilt.

4. The eternal perdition of a large portion of mankind—all the non-elect—embracing apparently the vast majority of the adult population of the nominally Christian world, and, according to Dr. Watts, the *whole* adult population of the pagan world through all time—is *inevitable*, let them do what they may to secure the renewing and pardoning grace of God.

These propositions are of the essence of strict Calvinism; every one of them is indispensable to the logical coherency of the scheme, and is avowed and defended, implicitly or explicitly, by Professor Watts. And what are the passages of Scripture to which he appeals in support of the theory which involves these extraordinary propositions? In concluding his discussion he thinks it fitting to submit to the readers the following, as “An outline of the Scripture testimony on which Calvinists base their doctrinal system.” He submits the following as “specimens” of this outline: “All things work together for good to them that love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. For whom he did fore-know, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that he might be the first born among many brethren. Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified. What

shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?" "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall He not with him also freely give us all things?" etc., etc. (Rom. viii. 28-32). "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ; according as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love; having predestinated us unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ unto himself; according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved; in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of trespasses, according to the riches of His grace." (Eph. i. 3-7.) "All that the Father giveth me shall come unto me; and him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which He hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. * * * No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day." (John vi. 37-44). We have in these passages, according

to Dr. Watts, "Specimens of the outline of the Scripture testimony upon which Calvinists base their doctrinal system;" they are, of course, selected, as being among the most clear and decisive in their teaching in support of that system. But of what weight or relevancy are they in proof of the propositions, or of any one of the propositions, which we have indicated as of the essence of the theory which he seeks to justify? Do they teach that God is able, in the exercise of His sovereignty, to bring all mankind to heaven, or to consign them all to hell, "without prejudice to the glory of any of His perfections;" or that there is *no difference* of any kind to which God has respect in determining whom to elect and whom to reject; or that the decrees of election and reprobation are, in the order of logic, antecedent to and independent of, all moral action as foreseen; or that hell is the *necessary* doom of a large part of mankind, let them do what they can to escape it?

It would be, in our judgment, an insult to the intelligence of the reader, to attempt to show that these questions, one and all, must be answered in the negative. The first passage quoted positively negatives, as we have shown, the Calvinistic theory, since it represents the fundamental act of God in the procedure of man's salvation as an act of *foreknowledge*. The teach-

ing in Ephesians and elsewhere that God acts as a sovereign, choosing men "according to the good pleasure of His will," gives no support to the Calvinistic dogma of God's sovereignty. No competent student of the Bible can deny or doubt that it teaches the doctrine of God's sovereignty. In no evangelical school of theologians is this doctrine called in question, but in all of them it is recognized and emphasized. Not the *fact*, but the *nature* of God's sovereignty is the vital question in dispute. The difficulties which confront the advocates of the Calvinistic dogma of the divine sovereignty are like those which would confront the mathematician in his investigations, in case he should adopt it as an axiom that things which are equal to the same things are *not* equal to one another. From time to time he would be compelled to accept conclusions baffling his intelligence and contradicting the fundamental laws of thought—a result which he would, of course, regard as due to the mysterious and transcendental nature of mathematics!

But we have said enough of Dr. Watts' proof texts. The propositions stated above, with which the theory of strict Calvinism stands or falls, are, as we have said, no part of "the gospel of the grace of God," no part of "the good news to *all* people" which Christ and His apostles preach-

ed, but Augustino-Calvino-Edwardean speculations with which Christian Theology has been burdened to its great injury.

We may be permitted to say, in conclusion, that our chief interest in this discussion is its bearing, not upon the theory of strict Calvinism which has but comparatively few advocates at the present time, but upon modified Calvinism of which there are several schemes more or less widely prevalent, which depart from strict Calvinism in adopting one or more of the following propositions: (1) That the atonement is universal in its design; (2) That man possesses natural but not moral ability to exercise repentance and faith; (3) that our inborn evil nature is not sinful in the proper sense of the term; (4) that the atonement removed the sentence of condemnation which came upon the race through the apostasy of Adam. But they all retain one of the most objectionable dogmas of the strict Calvinistic theory, viz., the dogma that the decree of election is irrespective of the moral action of men as foreseen, which involves, of logical necessity, the dogma that the decree of non-election (preterition, rejection) is irrespective of the moral action of men as foreseen. If the *elect* are "such always, such before birth, such at birth, such through infancy," it is as certain that the *non-elect* are "such always, such before birth,

such at birth, such through infancy," as it is that the whole of a thing is greater than its part. But non-election—preterition—is virtually identical with reprobation; the non-elect become, not only certainly, but *unavoidably*, the reprobate. For their alleged "natural ability" to regenerate themselves, being rendered "null and void" by their inborn "moral inability" should be regarded as a fiction—a nonentity. It follows, then, according to modified Calvinism, that the eternal perdition of a vast number of mankind is *inevitable*, let them do what they can to obtain salvation, even in the way appointed in the gospel. But it is as certain as that God lives that the dogma of the *inevitable* perdition of men is false. Hence modified Calvinism must be still further modified in order to be in harmony with the word of God.

In order to prevent misapprehension of our views as stated or implied in the preceding discussion, we subjoin the following propositions which were published in *The Standard*, February 16.

1. God is a being of absolute ethical perfection of which holiness and love are the essence.

2. The sovereignty of God is a prerogative in the exercise of which He constitutes and governs the universe according to His absolute ethical perfection.

3. The purposes of God, so-called, are one purpose; the one eternal act by which He adopted the existing plan of the universe, involving an infinity of executive volitions, which executive volitions—not purposes—sustain to each other relations both logical and chronological.

4. The purpose and foreknowledge of God are mutually conditioning factors of His whole course of dealing with personal agents.

5. God does all that He can do, consistently with the self-limitation, or self-restraint required by His absolute ethical perfection, to prevent apostasy in the case of all holy beings on probation.

6. Adam's probation, under law, having been terminated by his disobedience, he and his posterity were placed under a system of gracious probation based on the redemptive work of Jesus Christ.

7. The nature of the relation of Adam to his posterity by virtue of which his fall involved them in moral ruin is not revealed in the Scriptures.

8. By virtue of what he became, and did, and suffered, Jesus Christ rendered the salvation of all men possible and the salvation of a part certain.

9. The atonement availed to remove, absolutely and forever, the sentence of condemna-

tion which came upon all men through the apostasy of Adam.

10. There are not two classes of infants,—elect and non-elect, or reprobate,—but infants *as such*, and consequently, *all infants*, stand in the same relationship to God.

11. The disability of man is such that regeneration, of which repentance and faith are fruits, must be the exclusive work of God.

12. Mankind possess *plenary ability* so to use common grace and the means of common grace as to render the bestowment of renewing and forgiving grace *certain*.

13. God deals with all men in good faith; does all that He can wisely do to induce them so to seek salvation that He can bestow it consistently with the perfect system of gracious probation which it behooved Him to adopt.

14. There are four legitimate motives or principles of action to which the Holy Spirit appeals, in the use of the truth, to persuade men to seek salvation, viz., rational self-interest, the feeling of obligation, the natural principle of gratitude, and aspiration for something higher and better than they are or have.

15. The action of God in electing some men, and in rejecting others, is determined or conditioned by some *foreseen difference* between the members of these respective classes in the use

of common grace and the means of common grace.

16. The immediate antecedents of regeneration are the result of God's gracious dealing with men and of their response to that dealing, and are, as foreseen, among the reasons or conditions of His action in including them in the purpose of election.

17. There is no evidence that the immediate antecedents of regeneration are determined by what is called special grace, *essentially* different from that which is bestowed upon those who remain in unregeneracy.

18. The purpose of election is eternal and immutable, and infallibly secures the regeneration, justification, and final salvation of all included in it.

19. In advancing His kingdom on earth God acts, as in every other sphere, according to the law of His absolute ethical perfection; does all that He can do consistently with the system of gracious probation which involves due regard to the use made by His people of the manifold gifts of His providence and grace.

20. Consequently, the progress of the kingdom of God upon earth will be more or less rapid according to the measure of fidelity with which His people discharge the obligations of good stewardship.

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